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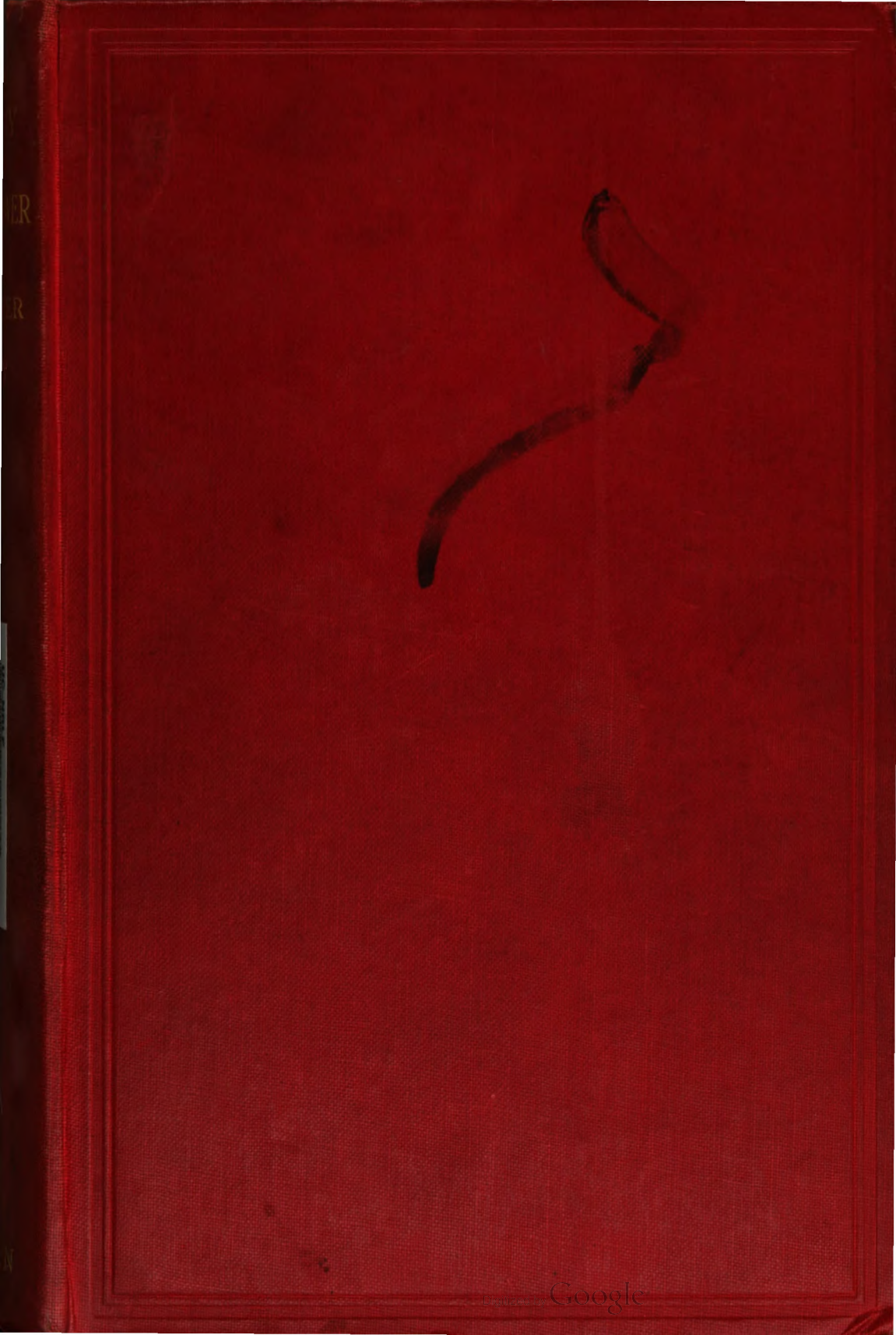
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# THE ARMY AND SEA POWER

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"Here is such a controversy between the Sailors and the Gentlemen, and such stomaching between the Gentlemen and Sailors, that it doth even make me mad to hear it. But, my Masters, I must have it left. For I must have the Gentleman to haul and draw with the mariner, and the mariner with the Gentleman."—DRAKE.

*

"You cannot expect the Navy to play international football without a goalkeeper."—ADMIRAL SIR ARTHUR WILSON.

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# THE ARMY & SEA POWER

*A Historical Outline*

*By*

*Major* R. B. Pargiter, R.A. (*p.s.c.*)
& *Major* H. G. Eady, M.C., R.E. (*p.s.c.*)

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# AUTHORS' PREFACE

THIS brief account of what is, perhaps, a somewhat neglected aspect of the work of the British Army has been written in the hope of advancing, to some small extent, the ideal of whole-hearted co-operation between the Services in the common task of Imperial Defence.

The authors make no claim to have carried out any original historical research, but have relied for their facts upon the works of Mahan, Corbett, Fortescue, Holland Rose, Lucas and others, to whom acknowledgement has been made in the text.

They would also like to record their thanks to Mr. Hudleston, C.B.E., Librarian of the War Office, for much valuable assistance and advice.



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# THE ARMY AND SEA POWER

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## CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

THAT the British Empire has been built up and is maintained to-day mainly by sea power is an axiom that none will deny. What is, perhaps, not so generally realized is the important part that the Army has played in establishing this sea power in the past, and is still playing in maintaining it to-day. For sea power is not, as is often popularly supposed, the business of the Navy alone, and to think so is a dangerous fallacy. Let us take but one example of this misconception. Speaking in the House of Commons during the first debate on the Naval estimates after the Great War, the following remarkable statement was made by a distinguished admiral. "May I remind the House," he said, "that in respect of its strategy, the Navy stands alone. It is not dependent in any way on the Army. . . . The Army can do nothing towards the command of the seas, and that is all the strategy the Navy has to consider. The Army, whether it be horse, foot, artillery, or tanks, can assist in no way in commanding the seas."[1] Amazing words, surely, for a sailor who must have studied the history of past wars, and who hundreds of times in his service must have sailed into ports, all over the world, defended and garrisoned by the Army whose aid he denies.

The truth is that genuine sea power, such as our own, is the slow but steady growth of centuries, and is based on three essential foundations, none of which can be

[1] Hansard (Commons), vol. 118, July 24, 1919.



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neglected if it is to endure. Firstly, the nation must be a seafaring nation, with its roots deep in the sea, and containing a large population who "go down to the sea in ships." It must, in other words, have a flourishing overseas trade and a strong mercantile marine to carry it. Secondly, in order to protect this trade, it must have a powerful and efficient fighting fleet. And thirdly, in order to give this fleet full mobility, so that it can operate wherever and in whatever manner may be necessary, it must possess a suitable network of maritime bases at strategic points on the principal sea routes. These maritime bases, using the word in its broadest sense to include all defended ports of every category, have always been necessary since the earliest days for reprovisioning and repairs, but their importance has increased very greatly in modern times, since the change from sail to steam, and subsequently oil, has rendered fleets increasingly dependent upon regular and frequent supplies of fuel.

These, then, are the three essential foundations of sea power, and if any one of them is lacking the edifice is not secure. The first is the contribution of the nation as a whole, the second that of the Navy, and the third, to a great extent, that of the Army. For it is an essential principle that the Navy itself should not be tied to the local defence of its bases, and although this principle has been violated on a few occasions in our history, always, as will be seen, with disastrous results, it is firmly established, and the main burden of the defence of these bases is now borne by the Army.

It is a task the importance of which is frequently under-estimated even by the Army itself; and it is often a silent and a thankless task, involving monotonous garrison duty in distant, and perhaps unhealthy, stations, far removed from the excitement and glamour of great

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campaigns. Yet the story of the way in which it has been carried out is one of which soldiers can well be proud, not only because it contains some of the most remarkable achievements in the history of the British Army, but also because, if it had not been faithfully performed, our vaunted sea power, and the vast empire which depends upon it, could never have been built up.

It is the purpose of this book to tell something of this story of the contribution of the Army to sea power, for it is, undoubtedly, one of the greatest interest. It includes accounts of numerous combined operations, which are perhaps the most interesting, as they are the most difficult, of all operations of war, and it revives many gallant and skilful episodes now almost forgotten. It takes us all over the world, and reminds us that there are few places in it where the British Army has not, at some time or other, been called upon to fight. And last, but not least, it will be found to contain many valuable and useful lessons for our guidance in the future.

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## CHAPTER II

# THE BEGINNING OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION

IN order to understand the part which the British Army played, mainly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in helping to consolidate England's sea power, it is necessary to recall briefly the early history of that maritime activity which began in the latter half of the fifteenth century, before the English appeared on the scene. The motives underlying the Age of Discovery were a queer mixture of commercial enterprise and missionary zeal. Spain and Portugal were at first the only competitors, for England and France were still weak and disunited at home, while the Dutch had not yet shaken off the Spanish yoke; and it was in order to prevent rivalry between the two nations that the Pope issued his famous Bull of 1493, dividing the world between them.

It is proposed to sketch first the opening up by the Portuguese of the Cape route to India, and then the activities of Spain in the New World, and thus prepare the stage for the arrival of the English.

The principal object of the early Portuguese voyages of discovery was to find an alternative road to the East, since the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 had closed the normal overland route to Asia. The newly invented mariners' compass provided the means, and that great scientist, Prince Henry the Navigator, supplied, from his retreat at Sagres, the brains and the driving power.



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The Portuguese soon established colonies in the Azores and in Madeira, but for many years they refused to sail farther south. The West Coast of Africa was a land of unknown terrors, and the face of any man so impious as to venture there would, so the superstition went, be turned black by the Almighty. It was only gradually that these fears were overcome. Each succeeding sailor, finding that nothing very terrible had happened to his predecessors, plucked up courage to press south a little farther, until at last, in 1487, the stout-hearted Bartholomew Diaz was swept by a storm right round the Cape without knowing it, finding land again at Algoa Bay. Seeing the coast stretching north-eastwards instead of south-eastwards, his terrified crew refused to sail farther, and on their return sighted the Cape for the first time. Full of the perils he had escaped, Diaz christened it the "Cape of Storms," but the name was changed by his king, lest future captains should be discouraged, to "Cape of Good Hope."

The next great event occurred in 1499, when Vasco da Gama, who had sailed from Lisbon two years before, returned in triumph after completing the first sea voyage to India and back. Da Gama hugged the African coast up to Malindi, where he found some Indian traders, and with them struck east across the Indian Ocean. His simple explanation on landing at Calicut, "We come to seek Christians and spices," sums up well the dual motive, already mentioned, of these early explorers.

After this, progress was rapid. Diaz, da Gama, and their like, had been simple mariners, but they were followed by men of another type, men who dreamed dreams, and who laid the foundations of a great Portuguese dominion in the East.

It was evident that such a dominion would have to

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depend on sea power, and at once there arose two rival schools of thought. The first, represented by Francisco d'Almeida, the first Viceroy of the Indies, wished to rely solely upon the fleet and to avoid all military commitments ashore, depending for the protection of the necessary trading posts upon the good will of the natives. The other school was led by Alfonso d'Albuquerque, a veteran soldier and a man of clearer vision, who may be regarded as the first apostle of the overseas naval base as we understand it to-day. He saw that his country could never command the Indian Ocean, however large her fleet, as long as she had no harbour of her own nearer than Lisbon, six months' voyage distant, and could not water or careen a ship without the permission of the natives. He saw, in short, that command of the sea does not depend only upon a strong navy, but demands also suitable bases from which that navy can operate, and that it must be the army's contribution to sea power to secure such bases.

Albuquerque had his way, and it was under his leadership that the foundations of the Portuguese Eastern Empire were laid. In his opinion there were five keys to the Indian Ocean: Aden, Ormuz, Diu, Goa, and Malacca; and Portugal, partly by conquest, partly by treaty, eventually won them all. It is of interest to note that Albuquerque considered the capture of Malacca so important that he employed his whole available force, of 19 ships, 800 European and 600 native troops, to take it.

This great Viceroy died in 1515, embittered by the ingratitude of his royal master; but his work was carried on, and by the end of the century the Portuguese, their monopoly as yet unchallenged, had built up a vast network of fortified posts and trading stations extending

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from the Cape Verde Islands and St. Helena along the African and Asian shores of the Indian Ocean, through Ceylon and Malaya, to Macao.

Incidentally, the early history of St. Helena is interesting. Discovered in 1502, it owed its first settlement to one Fernando Lopez, a man who had been convicted of treason in India and sentenced by Albuquerque to lose his nose, ears, and right hand. He was then shipped home, but rather than face his countrymen in this mutilated condition, he asked to be put ashore at St. Helena, where, with a few slaves, he began the cultivation of the island. It soon prospered, and became a regular depôt and port of call. It is noteworthy that the Portuguese made no attempt to establish a base at the Cape of Good Hope itself, nor at Mauritius, although they discovered that island also. The fact was that, having as yet no rivals to challenge their sea power, they needed no strategical posts to guard their long sea line of communication, and so occupied only such places as were of immediate commercial value.

While Portugal had been opening the road to the East, Spain had been equally active in the West. At first the goal was the same; it was Westward Ho! to the East. The early explorers were not consciously seeking the new world, but merely a westward route to Asia; and the very name of the West Indies is a reminder that their discoverer, Columbus, thought that he had found it. It was not until 1513, when Vasco Nunez de Balboa, a picturesque adventurer who had escaped from his creditors as a stowaway in a barrel, first sighted the Pacific from the Isthmus of Panama, that it was definitely realized that it was a new continent that had been discovered, and not merely another part of Asia. Wading fully armed with drawn sword into

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the sea, Vasco Nunez claimed the virgin ocean for his king, and shortly afterwards, dragging his dismantled ships with infinite toil across the isthmus, he launched upon it the first European keel. Six years later Magellan, a Portuguese captain in the service of Spain, passed through the Straits which bear his name, and made the first passage across the Pacific. He himself was killed by natives in the Philippines, but one ship of his expedition, the *Vittoria,* sailed on, and finally, in 1522, after a voyage of nearly three years, returned safely round the Cape to Spain, thus being the first vessel to circumnavigate the world.

The Spaniards were conquerors, not colonists. Despising everything but gold, they wasted no time on the smaller islands, but concentrated their efforts on the larger ones and on the mainland; and so furious was their onslaught that the greater part of their Empire in the New World was carved out within the space of a man's lifetime.

It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that the Iberian monopoly was seriously challenged. The Portuguese were the first to be attacked, and it was a curious stroke of fate which brought this about.

In 1580 the Portuguese King died without heirs, and Portugal, with all her overseas dominions, was annexed by Philip II. of Spain. In the same year the Dutch revolted against Spain and began their long fight for independence. Now the Dutch were the distributors, throughout Northern Europe, of the goods which the Portuguese brought back from the East, and so it occurred to Philip that a good way of reducing them to submission would be to forbid their ships to enter the harbours of Portugal. The Dutch, however, had no intention of losing their profitable trade, which was pro-

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viding them with the "sinews of war," and the only result of Philip's edict was to drive them out East, to seek for themselves at its source the merchandize of which they had been deprived. There followed inevitably a life and death struggle with Portugal for the mastery of the Eastern seas.

The Portuguese Empire, vast as it appeared, was in reality built upon the sand. The Portuguese were never a colonizing race. Like the Spaniards in the West, they made no attempt to develop the lands they conquered; they merely exploited their wealth; and their cruelty and rapacity made them universally hated by the natives. There were other reasons also why they were unfitted for empire. They were a small nation, and possessed the great handicap to sea power of having a more powerful neighbour on their land frontier. Finally, and worst of all, they ruined their racial purity by wholesale intermarriage with the slaves they brought home, so that it is hard to recognize in the Portuguese of the seventeenth century and onwards the sturdy stock of their ancestors of the Age of Discovery.

It is certain, therefore, that Portugal could not in any case have retained her monopoly for long: but the union of 1580 hastened her downfall. Not only did it inevitably sap her strength and initiative as the weaker partner, but it also drew her into enmity with England and Holland, the sworn foes of Spain. The seventeenth century was to see the gradual wresting from her of her dominion in the East by the young and vigorous Protestant nations of the North.

In this contest England and Holland started about level, but Holland soon forged ahead. While the English were involved in their domestic troubles with the Stuarts, the Dutch were deliberately applying themselves, as an



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integral part of their struggle for independence, to the task of supplanting the Portuguese.

The fight was long and bitter, lasting throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, but gradually the Dutch, helped as a rule by the natives, who felt that a change of masters could not possibly be for the worse, ousted their rivals. Malacca was finally captured in 1641, and Ceylon a few years later. At the same time, with true strategical insight, the Dutch saw that they required stepping-stones on the long road to India, and set about occupying those strategic points which, as has been seen, the Portuguese had neglected.

Mauritius and St. Helena were the first to be seized, but the latter was soon abandoned for the Cape, which was occupied and fortified in 1652, a century and a half after it had first been sighted by Diaz. Thenceforward, for another century and a half, it remained in Dutch hands, while St. Helena was taken over by the English East Company as soon as the Dutch had left it.

It is interesting to recall that an attempt had been made in 1620 by two English captains to acquire the Cape. Hearing that the Dutch were about to seize Table Bay, and fearing to lose the use of it for British ships, these men decided to forestall them, and, in the presence of the Dutchmen then in harbour, took formal possession in the name of James I. Their action was, however, at once repudiated by their employers and by the King. The East India Company had its eyes fixed on India, and was in no mood to dissipate any of its then slender resources on what appeared to be an unnecessary luxury. Nearly two centuries were to pass before England found herself obliged to send an expedition to capture what she might perhaps at that time have acquired for nothing.

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Thus, in the East, the Iberian monopoly was broken by the Dutch, and the English did not come in until later; but in the West it was England who first challenged the power of Spain. The process, however, was slow. It must be remembered that Spain's claims to the New World were backed not only by her own great military strength, but by the moral sanction of the Pope, and it was only gradually that Englishmen began to realize that Spain could be beaten and the Papal ruling defied. The Elizabethan adventurers, Drake and his successors, were really only glorified buccaneers, smiled or frowned on by the Queen as it best suited her policy; and it was not until the Spanish sea power had been broken in 1588 that England began to pass from piracy to trade and colonization.

Further north, however, where there was no Spanish barrier to overcome, England had been making steady progress. Although Columbus' theory of the south-west passage to the Indies had been exploded, the hope of finding a north-west passage lingered on for many years, and was the ultimate aim of most of the early explorers of North America, both English and French.

Cabot, sailing from Bristol under the patronage of Henry VII., had discovered Newfoundland in 1497, but it was not until nearly a century later that Sir Humphrey Gilbert took formal possession. Two years later Sir Walter Raleigh tried to colonize Virginia, and although his attempt failed, a second one in 1607 was successful. Virginia led indirectly, in 1609, to the acquisition of the Bermudas. These islands had been discovered at the beginning of the century by the Spaniard Bermudez, after whom they are called, but they had been shunned by Spain on account of their stormy coasts; and it was not until Sir George Somers, on his way out to Virginia, was

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wrecked there, that their possibilities were appreciated. An English colony was established there in 1612.

In 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers sailed from Plymouth for New England, and thenceforward the colonization of the American seaboard went steadily on.

France, in the meantime, had been busy on the St. Lawrence, which had been first explored by the Breton sailor Jacques Cartier, and had established there two main bases, at Port Royal in Acadia (Nova Scotia) and at Quebec. The Dutch, about the same time, established a colony at New Amsterdam.

Such, then, was the general situation when England, under Cromwell, first became a serious competitor for world power. In the East the Dutch were firmly established, in the place of the Portuguese, from the Cape to the East Indian Archipelago, while their merchants had penetrated to China and Japan, and their explorers to Australia and New Zealand. England, on the other hand, possessed at the time only one fortified trading station at Madras. In the Caribbean, Spain was still supreme, and England's footing was limited to Barbadoes and a few of the smaller West Indian Islands. In North America her position was more established, but even there her young colonies were cut in half by the Dutch at New Amsterdam, and threatened by the French in Canada.

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## CHAPTER III

# THE FOUNDATION OF BRITISH SEA POWER

"The trewe processe of Englysh polycye

* * * * *

Is thys, as who seith, south, north, est, and west
Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamyralte,
That we bee maysteres of the narowe see."
(*The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*, 1436.)

ENGLAND'S sea power, which had made such a glorious beginning under the great Elizabethan captains, had been allowed to sink very low under the first two Stuart kings, and it was to Cromwell, and his great admiral, Blake, that we owe its restoration. Cromwell set himself to restore the prestige which had been lost, and to "make the name of Englishman terrible abroad." It was Cromwell and Blake who introduced the first complete separation of the Navy from the mercantile marine, for they were the first to realize that the primary duty of the Navy of a nation, which is dependent for its life and growth upon its overseas trade, is to safeguard that trade. Once this fact is realized, the acquisition of suitable maritime bases, situated at strategic points on the main trade routes, follows naturally, and here again it was under Cromwell that a start was made. He saw that if the power of Spain in the New World was to be broken by England, she must first acquire a secure base of operations in the Caribbean Sea; and his keen eye was also the first to see the value of Gibraltar.

So far England had only raided the Spanish dominions



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in America; the expedition sent by Cromwell in 1655 to seize Hispaniola (Santo Domingo) was the first attempt at permanent conquest, and was the first step in the consolidation of that West Indian empire which, for the next century and a half, was to play so important a part in British trade and diplomacy, and which was to cost the lives of so many British soldiers.

The operation in its broad lines was well conceived. The objective was a good one, Hispaniola being the chief Spanish base in the Caribbean. In addition to the fleet which was to convey the expeditionary force, a second was to watch the coast of Spain to intercept reinforcements, and the new colonies were to assist with supplies and men. Finally, every effort was made to ensure secrecy, and the force sailed under sealed orders.

The execution of the plan, however, fell far short of its conception. The despatch of a fleet of some thirty sail and an army of several thousand men three thousand miles into the tropics to attack an enemy stronghold is an operation demanding the most careful preparation, and Cromwell, busy with a refractory Parliament, was unable to devote to it the attention it deserved. Desborough, Major-General and Commissioner of the Admiralty, to whom the actual preparations were deputed, proved quite unequal to the task. In stores, personnel, and leadership, serious mistakes were made. The contractors, as usual, swindled, with the result that the force sailed short of supplies of all kinds. Instead of sending complete regiments, new units were hastily thrown together, consisting largely of undesirables and bad characters, under officers they did not know. Even these blunders, however, serious as they were, might have been obviated by able leadership, but here the most fatal mistake of all was made. Two joint commanders were appointed, Venables

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for the Army, and Penn (the father of the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania) for the Fleet. In themselves both were able enough, but they made an ill-matched pair, and as both were suspected of disloyalty to the Commonwealth, matters were made worse by sending with them three civil commissioners to report on their behaviour. "Colonel Venables," says Molyneux in his remarkable book *Conjunct Expeditions*, written in 1759, "as well as the Admiral, was secretly in the King's Interest. On this account, Venables and his Troops, to the number of 5,000, amongst whom many were Royalists, were hurried on board at Portsmouth, whence he immediately sailed for Barbadoes, though little prepared for such an Expedition; that one great end seemed to be, to get rid of them."

Under conditions such as these the finest plan was bound to miscarry. "Brave designs," as Venables wrote later, "can never succeed with such bridles." The expedition was to be England's first bitter lesson, that, of all operations in war, a combined operation of this nature is one of the most difficult, and one that is foredoomed to failure unless the greatest forethought and care are spent on its organization. Cromwell afterwards blamed himself bitterly for not having dealt with its preparation in person.

The expedition sailed in December, 1654, and at first all went well, one of the civil commissioners reporting that the relations between Admiral and General were "sweet and hopeful." But when the force reached Barbadoes in January, 1655, the first hitch occurred. Cromwell had been led to believe that the Barbadians would co-operate heartily, but they proved to be thoroughly unsympathetic. Some reinforcements were eventually secured, although largely, as Carlyle says, "a sad miscellany of broken Royalists, unruly Levellers, and the like," and a further

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thousand were collected from St. Kitts. With these, bringing the total force to some six thousand men, Penn and Venables sailed on, and arrived off Hispaniola in April.

The attack was a complete fiasco. Penn was for seizing the town by a *coup de main,* but Venables and the commissioners vacillated until all hope of surprise was lost, and then landed some thirty miles west of it. There is no need to dwell on the rest of the story ; early writers have left a vivid picture of it. "The vanguard was commanded by Adjutant-General Jackson, who, as soon as he was attacked by the Spaniards, ran away, and his troops after him. . . . The commissioners owned, by a letter they wrote to the Governor of Barbadoes, that had not the enemy been as fearful as their own men, they might, in a very few days, have destroyed the whole Army."

Exhausted and disorganized by trying marches through the jungle, and decimated by fever, the force eventually fell into an ambush, and straggled back in complete disorder to its ships, which early in May put to sea again.

The decision was then made to attack Jamaica.

Jamaica had been discovered by Columbus on his second voyage in 1494, and colonized by his son, Diego, when he was Governor of Hispaniola. The Spaniards had built St. Iago, the present Spanish Town, as their capital, while Caguaya, now Port Royal, was the chief port. The colony had not prospered, however, and was still sparsely populated. It was not unknown to the English, as it had already been twice raided by them, and Penn and Venables thought that it could be easily captured, and might compensate to some extent for their failure at Hispaniola.

Accordingly the expedition sailed to Port Royal, sailors and soldiers no longer on speaking terms, although

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Venables had taken steps to avoid a repetition of the scenes at Hispaniola. "Immediately on their landing, which was on the 3rd of May, Venables ordered that if any should be found attempting to run away, the next man to him should put him to death; which if he failed to do he should be liable to Court Martial." The Spaniards, who, curiously enough, had received no warning from Hispaniola, were completely surprised, and Passage Fort, defending Spanish Town, was taken almost without a shot. Instead, however, of marching at once on Spanish Town, Venables, on the plea that his men were in no condition to fight, agreed to a six days' armistice. At the end of that time the Spaniards, it is true, capitulated, but the delay had been most mischievous. Not only did a week of inaction in the marshes cause a severe outbreak of fever amongst the troops, but the respite also gave time to the defenders to remove their valuables to the interior of the island, so that when the English eventually marched into the capital they found a deserted town. Badly clothed, insufficiently fed, and without proper medicines, they fell easy victims to fever, two thousand sickening within a month. The Spanish garrison withdrew with their slaves into the forests of the interior, from where they carried on guerilla warfare against the invaders. The situation of the latter went from bad to worse; half the force was sick, the other half starved, demoralized, and mutinous. Venables and Penn, still at daggers drawn, eventually left the unfortunate expedition to its fate, and sailed, separately, for home, each anxious to denounce the other. Both, however, on their arrival, were at once clapped into the Tower by Cromwell for deserting their posts; and although later released, were never again employed.

Meanwhile, in Jamaica, their departure had left the

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command to a man of a very different stamp, Fortescue, a colonel of the New Model, who did his utmost to restore order and to consolidate the capture. Cromwell gave him every support. Although bitterly "humbled," as he put it, "for the reproof God gave us at St. Domingo," he set himself, with his customary energy, to make the best of what he had got, and to convert the unpromising-looking conquest into a strong outpost against the power of Spain. In a letter to Fortescue, dated November, 1655, he urges him to "study first his security by fortifying," being "very careful not to scatter till you have begun a security in some one place." He goes on: "We have sent Commissioners and Instructions into New England, to try what people may be drawn thence. We have done the like to the Windward English Islands; and both in England and Scotland and Ireland you will have what men and women we can well transport. We think, and it is much designed amongst us, to strive with the Spaniard for the mastery of all those seas."

The gallant Fortescue, however, died of fever before this letter reached him, and two successors followed him within the year. The command then fell to Colonel D'Oyley, who at last succeeded in establishing some semblance of order. Cromwell was as good as his word, and sent out two large convoys of settlers (including a thousand Irish girls), and by the end of 1656 the colony began to show some signs of prosperity.

In 1658 an attempt was made by Spain to recapture it. A force despatched from Cuba landed at Ocho Rios, in the north of the island, and was joined by the local guerillas. It is a good illustration of the impassable nature of the interior in those days that D'Oyley had to send troops to eject them round by sea, a voyage of eleven days. The Spanish position was stormed before it could

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be reinforced, but the enemy were not completely "mopped up" until 1660.

Ten years later, in 1670, by the Treaty of Madrid, Spain recognized England's possession of Jamaica, as well as of the other West Indian Islands then in her hands.

Once in the hands of England, the sworn enemy of Spain, Jamaica soon became the main base of the buccaneers. Men of all nationalities, united only by their reckless daring and greed for Spanish gold, they were quick to see its peculiar advantages. Not only was it centrally placed within the ring of Spanish possessions, but in its colonists, mostly ex-soldiers who much preferred raiding to work on the plantations, they found willing accomplices. The most famous of the buccaneers, the Welshman, Henry Morgan, never acted without a commission from the Governor of Jamaica, a post which he filled himself on three occasions, and by his amazing exploits won himself a knighthood.

If Jamaica gave the buccaneers an ideal base, they in their turn gave Jamaica wealth and security. A constant stream of plunder flowed into Port Royal, and we read that silver became so cheap that horses were shod with it. To guard against retaliation by the Spaniards, the town was strongly fortified. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that it is to the buccaneers that England really owes the consolidation of Jamaica as her principal base in the Caribbean Sea; while their ceaseless attacks made a steady drain on Spain's wealth and prestige in the New World, and prepared the way for the ultimate overthrow of her dominion.

The story now passes from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean, that sea which has played a greater part than any other in the history of the human race. The

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tale of England's doings there, at times a very chequered one, is of great interest, and illustrates very clearly the dependence of the Navy upon land bases, and the part played by the Army in capturing and holding such bases.

Before recounting Cromwell's part in this story, it is necessary to go back a little and see how England's interest in the Mediterranean gradually arose. The forces which drew her there were two. Firstly, there was the necessity for protecting her growing trade with the Levant against the Barbary corsairs; and secondly, the gradual recognition of the great strategical importance of the Straits of Gibraltar in wars with her hereditary enemies, France and Spain.

The first of these forces began to operate at the end of the sixteenth century. It must be remembered that the Mediterranean at that time was divided into two definite spheres. In the eastern half the Turks were supreme, although their further progress was held in check by Venice, with her outpost at Crete, and by the Knights of St. John at Malta. The western half was a Spanish lake, for the Spanish Empire then included Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, and France had not yet taken her place as a naval power in the Mediterranean.

It was in this western or Spanish sphere that the Barbary corsairs, based on Tunis and Algiers, and instructed in seamanship by various renegade European sailors, grew steadily more daring and more powerful. Their activities at last forced Spain to maintain, for the first time, a separate Mediterranean squadron, but, as time went on, it became clear that even by this means she was unable to police the sea, and that if England and Holland wished to protect their trade with the Levant, they would have to make their own arrangements to do so. In 1620 an English fleet entered the Mediterranean for

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the first time, and thenceforward her interests there steadily increased.

The second force which drew England into the Mediterranean was slower to operate. It took Englishmen a long time to shake off the strategical ideas of the Elizabethan age, and to realize that the Spanish naval situation had completely altered. In the days of the Elizabethan wars, Portugal had been part of Spain, and the whole Spanish sea power had been based on her Atlantic seaboard, on the harbours of Galicia and Portugal, and on Cadiz. But when Portugal regained her independence, and Spain began to keep a fleet in the Mediterranean, the problem became quite different, as a glance at the map will show. Before, the Straits of Gibraltar had been of no particular strategic importance; now they were the key of the whole position. If England, in a war with Spain, could seize and hold the Straits, she could keep the two halves of Spanish sea power apart, and deal with each in detail. Yet history shows that Englishmen were very slow to realize this salient fact. Corbett, in his *England in the Mediterranean,* says that the first proposal to attack Gibraltar was made in 1625, at a naval council of war off St. Vincent, by a Scottish soldier of fortune called Bruce, but the plan was rejected. Then the Civil War broke out, and England was too fully occupied at home to think about the Mediterranean. When, under Cromwell, she again took her part in foreign affairs, she found that the situation had undergone another important change. Richelieu had built Toulon, and France, in her turn, had become a Mediterranean power. The importance of the Straits of Gibraltar were thus doubled, for they separated the two halves of French sea power, based respectively on Brest and Toulon, just as effectually as they did the Spanish.

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The first practical proof of this important fact, which was to play so large a part in future wars, was given, in 1654, by Blake, who, by keeping a three weeks' watch in the Straits, prevented the Brest squadron from entering the Mediterranean. In Cromwell's war with Spain, which really began with the capture of Jamaica in 1655, but which was not officially declared until 1656, a further stage was reached. In that year, for the first time, not only the capture, but the permanent retention of Gibraltar was proposed, and by Cromwell himself.

The fleet, under Blake and Montague, had been sent to operate against the Spanish ports, in order to prevent Spain from reinforcing the West Indies. In April, 1656, at a council of war held at sea, an attack on Cadiz was discussed, but rejected, and Gibraltar was then again mooted. But, as Montague reported, "there appeared no great mind to it." The fortress was at that time strong, and "the seamen not for land service unless it be a sudden plunder." "They are valiant," he continued, "but not to be ruled or kept in any Government ashore. Nor have your sea officers much stomach to fight ashore." (Another contemporary writer, an eyewitness of the battle of Dunbar, appears to be of the same opinion. "The English had the pursuit," he writes, "for about eight miles or farther, to neere Muscleburgh : the spoyle of the field, which was much, the seamen stole, whilst the soldiers pursued" !)

Cromwell, however, realised the importance of the Rock, and pressed the idea. "If possessed," he wrote, "and made tenable by us, would it not be both an advantage to our trade and an annoyance to the Spaniard ; and enable us, without keeping so great a fleet on that coast, with six nimble frigates lodged there to do the Spaniard more harm than by a fleet, and ease our

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own charge?" To this Montague, after a close reconnaissance in person, replied: "I perceive much desire that Gibraltar should be taken. My thoughts as to that are, in short, these: that the likeliest way to get it is by landing on the sand and quickly cutting it off between sea and sea, or so securing our men there that they may hinder the intercourse of the Town with the Main, frigates lying near, too, to assist them: and it is well known that Spain never victualeth any place for one month. This will want four or five thousand men, well formed and officered."

By the time this report reached Cromwell, however, he had changed his plans. Dunkirk was to be attacked, and no troops could be spared for the capture of Gibraltar. It is believed that Cromwell, if he had taken Gibraltar, proposed to cut through what is now the neutral ground and so convert the Rock into an island.

Blake and Montague then decided to find another port, on the African side, to serve them as a base, feeling that it would be "an unspeakable advantage to England to have a fort and possession thereof." Shortly after, however, the bulk of the fleet was recalled to the Channel, and so this design also came to nothing; but it is nevertheless important, as for years to come this idea of a base on the African side was to supersede the idea of Gibraltar.

With the Restoration came the opportunity to acquire such a base. The Imperialistic revival, which Cromwell had introduced, was carried on by Charles II. and his Cavaliers. While rejecting everything to do with Cromwell's Army, they retained, fortunately for England, the traditions of Blake's Navy. Charles himself came to the throne with great dreams of overseas empire, and his reign began with considerable promise. His marriage with Catherine of Braganza gave England, as the dowry of the new Queen, Bombay and Tangier, and began an

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alliance which has lasted until the present day, and which has been of great value to both countries, as England has been able, on many occasions, to use Portugal and her colonies as bases, while Portugal has owed the safety of these colonies in the main to British sea power.

It is interesting to see that the value of Bombay was little suspected by the Navy Office of the time, and that apparently we nearly failed to get possession of it. In his diary for May 15, 1663, Mr. Pepys writes: "The Portugalls have choused us, it seems, in this island of Bombay, in the East Indys; for after a great charge of our fleets being sent thither with full commission from the King of Portugall to receive it, the Governor by some pretence or other will not deliver it to Sir Abraham Shipman, sent from the King, nor to My Lord of Marlborough; which the King takes highly ill and I fear our Queene will fare the worse for it. The Dutch decay there exceedingly, it being believed that their people will revolt from them there, and they forced to give up their trade." The prospective loss of Bombay, however, did not seem to worry him unduly. "I did inform myself well in things relating to the East Indys," he writes later, "both of the country, and the dis-appointment the King met with the last voyage by the knavery of the Portugall Viceroy, and the inconsiderableness of the place of Bombaim, if we had had it. But, above all things, it seems strange to me that matters should not be understood before they went out: and also that such a thing as this, which was expected to be one of the best parts of the Queene's portion, should not be better understood; it being, if we had it, but a poor place, and not really so as was described to our King in the draught of it, but a poor little island; whereas they made the King and the Lord Chancellor, and other learned men about the King, believe that, and

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other islands which are near it, were all one piece; and so the draught was drawn and presented to the King, and believed by the King, and expected to prove so when our men come thither; but it is quite otherwise."

In Tangier, however, England at last got that "fort and possession thereof" for which Blake had hankered, and the place was, in fact, used by the Portuguese Ambassador as a strong argument in favour of the match, on the grounds that it would make the English masters of the Mediterranean trade.

It was taken over in January, 1662, the Earl of Peterborough, the uncle of the Peterborough who became famous later in the reign of Queen Anne, being appointed the first Governor.

Pepys records on February 20, 1662: "Letters from Tangier from My Lord, telling me how upon a great defete given to the Portuguese there by the Moors, he had put in 300 men into the towne, and so he is in possession, of which we are very glad, because now the Spaniards' designs of hindering our getting the place are frustrated."

The garrison consisted of two regiments specially raised, a Tangier regiment of horse, which is now the 1st Royal Dragoons, and a Tangier regiment of foot, which later became the 2nd Foot, and which is now the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), together with three battalions transferred from Dunkirk, which were later incorporated in the Queen's. The total strength was some three thousand men.

An elaborate code of "Lawes and Ordinances of War, established for the better governing of His Majesties Forces in the Kingdoms of Sus, Fez and Morocco" was drawn up, which appear to have been very comprehensive. "Let no man presume to Blaspheme," they begin,



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". . . upon pain of having his tongue bored with a red hot iron." The soldiers are urged to patience in the event, which duly came to pass, of the pay being in arrears. "If it chance that the monthly entertainment be not paid on the very day, or that it cannot be sent unto the Souldiers for some cause . . . none shall therefore make any tumult, or speak any seditious words, or seek to force his Captain to the payment thereof, neither do the less duty, but shall have a care of his marches and watches, contenting himself with a reasonable loan until the money be come, and he shall fully perform the duty of a good Souldier, and whosoever doth the contrary, or accompanies those that do, shall dye for it." Duelling was also a penal offence, while drunkenness (off duty) and "frequent swearing" were punished with a "forfeit of Half a Day's Pay."

As soon as the town had been occupied, the building of a mole to improve the harbour was begun. "They did bring us," again says Pepys, "a brave draught of the Mole to be built there, and report that it is likely to be the most considerable place the King of England hath in the world." In addition, in order to strengthen the land front against the turbulent tribesmen of the hinterland, Peterborough set to work to construct a ring of forts on the surrounding hills. The Moors, egged on by Spain, who flatly refused to recognize the transfer of the town to England, did not leave the garrison long in peace. After putting forward a series of impossible demands they delivered their first attack in May, and the whole subsequent history of Tangier is that of one long defence against their fierce onslaughts. This was the British Army's first real experience of savage warfare, and at first, as it differed so much from the precise and somewhat stilted tactics of the day, they found themselves at a disadvantage against an enemy who excelled in ruses

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and stratagems. In the hard school of experience, however, they learnt quickly, and soon grew as cunning as their foes. Many devices, familiar enough later, were first employed at Tangier, such, for example, as bombs and "stink-pots," dogs chained up with the outposts to give the alarm, and smoke screens of burning grass.

The service was at first popular, and many volunteers came from home to take part in it. Amongst them was the future Duke of Marlborough, who received at Tangier his baptism of fire.

The Moors were assisted by Spanish and French mercenaries, and also, sad to relate, by certain Englishmen who found gun-running lucrative enough to stifle their consciences. In spite of a heroic defence, which witnessed, as Fortescue has said, "as gallant feats of arms as ever were wrought by English soldiers," the garrison were hard put to it to hold their own; in fact, at one time all but three of the forts had been captured. In response to urgent appeals for help, reinforcements were at last sent out, some companies of the Guards and 1st Royal Scots, and a specially raised second Tangier regiment, which later became the 4th Foot, the King's Own Royal Regiment.

All this continual fighting, however, as well as the building of the mole, was costing money, and Tangier soon became a heavy drain on the national finances. "To the Tangier Committee," says Pepys on April 3, 1663, "where we find ourselves at a great stand; the establishment being but 7000 L per annum, and the forces to be kept in the town at the least estimate that My Lord Rutherford can be got to bring is 5300 L. The charge of this year's work at the Mole will be 13,000 L; besides 1000 L a year to My Lord Peterborough as pension, and the fortifications and contingencys, which puts us to a

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great stand." All might still have been well, however, if Charles, by his intrigues with Louis XIV. of France, had not lost the confidence of Parliament, which finally refused to grant him funds. In vain the King urged that the fortress had proved its worth in safeguarding the Levant trade, and that two millions had already been spent on the mole. Parliament retorted that the money already granted had been largely misappropriated, that there was no guarantee that this would not happen again in the future, and that Tangier was rapidly becoming "a nursery for Popish soldiers." Pepys recognized how strong this feeling had become, as he states, when Lord Rutherford was appointed Governor: "I am sorry to see a Catholicke Governour sent to command there, when all the rest of the officers almost, are such already," and later again, he records that Sir W. Coventry stated to him "that this place was to the King as my Lord Carnarvon says of wood, that it is an excrescence of the earth provided by God for the payment of debts."

In the meantime, while King and Commons squabbled, the unfortunate garrison was left to hold on as best it could. The soldiers' pay was two years in arrears, and they were driven to sell their clothes, and even, in some cases, their arms and ammunition, to buy food. It speaks volumes for the loyalty and courage of officers and men that, under such conditions, weak, weary, and disheartened, they still managed to keep the flag flying. Fortunately, in 1681, thanks to the personal influence of Colonel Percy Kirke, the last Governor, the Moors agreed to a truce for four years. Before this term expired, Charles, on the verge of bankruptcy, had to decide on abandonment. In 1683 a commission, of which Pepys was a member, was sent out to report, and recommended evacuation on the grounds that the harbour was

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by nature too exposed, that the expense of artificial protection would be prohibitive, and that, in addition, the land defence of the fortress would always be difficult and costly.

At the end of the year Admiral Lord Dartmouth was sent out to superintend the withdrawal. The mole and forts, built with so much labour, were demolished, and Tangier, after a life of twenty-two years as a British naval base, was finally evacuated in April, 1684.

Thus ended England's first attempt to establish a base in the Mediterranean, an attempt which had been begun with such high hopes. Many thinking people at the time seem to have felt that its abandonment was a mistake, and it is possible that, if Charles had not lost the confidence of Parliament, the necessary money for its upkeep might have been voted. On the other hand, it had certainly cost a very heavy price in blood and money, and the nation, as a whole, was probably thankful to let it go.

As long as Spain had been their common enemy, England and Holland had been allies, but as soon as the Spanish danger had been removed, alliance was replaced by the natural rivalry of two States each dependent for growth and prosperity upon its seaborne trade. The rivalry might have been friendly, for there were room and trade enough for both, but for the jealousy of the Dutch, who were determined to retain the monopoly they had wrested from the Portuguese, and who would brook no competition. Their methods were ruthless, the best known incident being the Massacre of Amboyna in 1623, when a number of Englishmen were deliberately put to death for having dared to trade in the Moluccas. Treatment such as this was but a poor return for the help which they

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had received from England in their long fight for independence, but the Dutch were ruled by their merchants, and preferred dividends to sentiment. It was not only the rigid enforcement of their trade monopoly, however, which stood in the way of England's legitimate aspirations, but the growth of their mercantile marine, which threatened to absorb the entire carrying trade of the world. Pepys shows how high-handed they were in the Restoration Period. "Great talk," he records on February 9, 1664, "of the Dutch proclaiming themselves in India, Lords of the Southern Seas, and denying traffick to all ships but their own, upon pain of confiscation," and again on the 15th, "this afternoon Sir Thomas Chamberlin came to the office to me, and showed me several letters from the East Indys, showing the height that the Dutch are come to there, showing scorn to all the English, even in our only factory there at Surat, beating several men, and hanging the English standard at St. George under the Dutch flag in scorn: saying, that whatever their masters do or say at home, they will do what they list, and be masters of all the world there: and have so proclaimed themselves Soveraigne of all the South Seas; which certainly our King cannot endure, if," he adds naïvely, "the Parliament will give him money."

War, sooner or later, was inevitable, but Cromwell did all he could to avoid it, for he felt deeply the pity of it that these two young and vigorous sea nations, the champions of the Protestant faith, should fly at each other's throats in the face of a world hostile to them both. But the Dutch rejected all his overtures, and there remained no alternative but to fight it out.

In all, three Anglo-Dutch wars were fought; the first under Cromwell, the second and third under Charles II. In all three the main theatre was, naturally enough, the

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Channel, although there was also fighting on the West Coast of Africa and in America. England made no attacks on the Cape, or on the Dutch possessions further East; and although the Dutch twice took St. Helena, on each occasion they were ejected again within a few months.

In Europe, a series of combined operations was undertaken against the Dutch harbours to capture or destroy their merchant fleets, notably at Ulie and Schelling, while in the second war the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway, burnt the English warships at Chatham, and blocked the Thames, "a dreadful spectacle as ever Englishmen saw," wrote John Evelyn, an eyewitness, "and a dishonour never to be wiped off."

The most important place which changed hands was New Amsterdam, which thenceforward became New York. Cromwell had contemplated its capture during the first war, and actually sent out an expedition for the purpose, but peace was declared before the attack could materialize. Warned by this, the Dutch Governor, Stuyvesant, "Stiff-necked Peter" as he was called, worked hard to strengthen his defences, but the force sent out by Charles in 1664, four ships and five hundred regular troops under Colonel Nicolls, augmented by New England Volunteers, was too strong for him, and, after tearing up the first summons to surrender and stamping on it with his wooden leg, the hot-tempered old veteran was at last forced to capitulate.

The conquest of New York was of great importance. Not only was it a fine maritime base which had, in Dutch hands, cut the English colonies in half, but also, by virtue of its position at the mouth of the Hudson River, it controlled the southern of the two routes leading into the interior of Canada. As the northern route, the St.

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Lawrence, was in the hands of the French, the disappearance of the Dutch left the fate of North America a clear issue between England and France.

In the end, England gained from Holland all that she was fighting for. The Navigation Laws to protect her merchant shipping were upheld, and the Dutch trade monopoly in the East abolished. Holland's vast empire in the East still remained intact and outwardly sound, but from the close of the Anglo-Dutch wars it was really beginning to decay, for her sea power, upon which it all depended, was steadily declining. Holland, like Portugal, possessed the great handicap of being a small nation with powerful land neighbours.

After the close of the third war in 1674 there was peace between the two countries for a century, a peace cemented by the accession of William of Orange to the throne of England and an alliance against the common enemy, France. This long peace proved, as Cromwell had felt, that it was quite possible for the two nations to live and develop side by side. The next century was to see England engaged in a life and death struggle for the mastery of the seas, but the struggle was not with Holland, but with France. It was not until the Dutch threw in their lot with the French that this struggle implicated them, and forced England, in self-defence, to capture their principal overseas bases in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of France.

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE DUEL WITH FRANCE

## I. The War of the Spanish Succession

The long duel between England and France was fought out in a series of wars which, beginning in the last part of the seventeenth century, continued all through the eighteenth century and down to Waterloo. It was a struggle between two nations whose interests met and clashed everywhere, and as such it was fought all over the world, and the various brief interludes of peace were but breathing spaces before the next round.

The struggle, inevitable in any case sooner or later, was precipitated by the ambition of Louis XIV. Like Philip II. of Spain before him, and Napoleon and William II. of Germany later, Louis, although ruler of the most powerful state in Europe, aimed at world domination, by seeking to conquer Holland and absorb the vast empire of Spain. England, following that instinct to preserve the balance of power (a phrase which appears in the *London Gazette* of 1701), which never deserts her people in times of crisis, and which has been the guiding factor in her foreign policy ever since the days of Elizabeth, took up his challenge, and found, in William of Orange, a leader who correctly grasped the magnitude of the struggle.

During the last years of the seventeenth century, there was a continuous series of operations on the French seaboard. The decline of the English Navy under Charles II.



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had encouraged Louis' hopes of gaining command of the sea. In Brest and St. Malo, the French had two good bases, and another, still more dangerous to England, was obtained by the purchase of Dunkirk from Charles II., much to the indignation of his subjects. "I am sorry to hear," wrote Pepys, "that the news of the selling of Dunkirk is taken so ill," while Lord Sandwich "wonders any wise people should be so troubled thereat and scorns all their talk against it"; but in those days the instinct of the people in matters of defence was often sounder than that of their rulers. Based on these harbours, Louis took full advantage of England's internal troubles, and when war broke out in 1689, held over her head a continual threat of invasion. The battles of Barfleur and La Hogue in 1692, however, crippled the French fleet and dispelled this menace, and it was then resolved to carry the war into the enemy's country and strike at the French bases themselves, for, as Rooke put it, "blocking up the enemy's fleet in their principal base, insulting their coasts, and burning their towns at the same time, would expose them to the world, and make them very uneasy at home."

A combined force was therefore prepared, but, unfortunately, the Government gave the commanders no definite orders. The Admiral, Russell, was informed that "no certain Resolution was yet taken in what service to employ them, but that this was left to be settled by a General Council of Land and Sea Officers, when the transports should be joined." "The plain source of all this confusion," writes Molyneux, "was that the Ministers of State were unwilling to take upon themselves the Direction of an Affair which they were apprehensive would miscarry, but were willing to put it upon the Land and Sea Officers, that they alone might remain account-

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able for what happened." The official account of this General Council shows very clearly the results of this indecision, as well as the difficulties inherent in combined operations at that time. An attack on St. Malo was first mooted, but the naval officers decided that they could do nothing against the enemy's ships there "until the town itself could be so far reduced by the Land Forces, as that the ships might not receive any great annoyance from the enemy's guns in the attempt," while the soldiers retaliated by saying that "the Troops could not do any great service without the assistance of the Fleet." The Council then turned its attention to Brest, but the same conclusion was reached, the Navy declining to approach the ports until the Army had reduced the coast batteries, and the Army refusing to attack the coast batteries without the assistance of the fleet. "It was then considered," the Report goes on, "whether the fleet might lie in safety on the coast of Normandy, to protect the Army, either in an attempt at Harve-de-Grace, La Hogue, or any place thereabouts," but again without agreement being reached. So much time had by then been wasted that the Flag Officers, while admitting that something ought to be attempted "since the transport ships, with the Land Forces, were come to the Fleet in order to try what might be done against the enemy," came to the conclusion that "the season of the year was so far spent as not to admit of the Fleet's going with safety thither." Beyond causing a certain amount of alarm on the French coasts, therefore, nothing tangible was achieved.

In 1693 an equally futile attempt was made against Brest, but it was followed, later in the year, by a more successful attack on St. Malo, in which the harbour was rendered untenable by bombardment and fireships, and only the insufficiency of the land forces with the Fleet

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prevented the complete destruction of this important base.

In the next year, 1694, a more ambitious scheme was conceived. It was proposed to land on the French coast and to "erect a Fort on a certain promontory near Brest, which would have commanded that Haven, and have entirely prevented their assembling, as the French were wont to do, their grand fleets there." This project had apparently first been suggested by a soldier to the Earl of Nottingham some years previously, "and hints of it having been given to the French, they resolved to spare no cost or pains, in order to prevent a scheme from taking effect, which they knew would have deprived them of the best port they have in this part of the world." De Vauban, therefore, put the town into such an excellent state of defence that the attempt to land the troops was a disastrous failure, over a thousand men, including the General, being lost. The expedition, however, went on, sailing along the French coast, bombarding harbours when possible, and forcing the French troops on shore to march day and night to prevent any attempt at landing.

The next year saw further destructive bombardments of St. Malo and an attack on Dunkirk, but the defences of the latter proved too strong for the four hundred troops employed. Throughout 1696 and 1697 similar methods of harassing the French coasts were employed, "to amuse the enemy," in the language of the time, the effects of which were thus summed up by Molyneux: "Though, upon the whole, both the English and the Confederates reaped very considerable Advantages, from their ruining in this Manner all the Enemy's Coasts, while their Squadrons were shut up in their Ports, and in no capacity to undertake anything, yet on the return of the Fleet the Council thought fit to examine into the Conduct both of

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the Officers and Engineers, who charged each other reciprocally with want of skill, or want of Zeal; but upon a thorough Examination into the matter, it was found their want of Unanimity was the greatest misfortune; and it appeared so plainly that, by proper Management the French Ports might be ruined, notwithstanding the mighty Pains and immense Expence employed in fortifying them, that it was resolved to prosecute the same method."

Meanwhile, the war was also being waged in America, with varying fortunes and no decisive results. Fort Royal in Acadia was destroyed by New England troops in 1690, but an attempt against Quebec failed dismally. In 1692, a strong fleet was despatched with 1,500 troops, a considerable force for those days, and which was to be augmented by regiments already at Barbadoes. Unfortunately, however, the commanders again had received no definite orders, and after various operations had been proposed against Martinique, Dominica, and Quebec, an attempt on Placentia, in Newfoundland, was agreed to. At the last moment, however, the soldiers refused to co-operate, whereupon the Admiral returned in disgust, with ships and troops in a lamentable condition, and nothing achieved. In 1694 the French made a serious attack on Jamaica, and this so alarmed the English Government that in the following year they sent out an expedition, under Commodore Wilmot and Colonel Lillingston, to co-operate with the Spaniards in the capture of Haiti. This expedition seems to have been even more remarkable than the others of this period, and its story, as told by Molyneux, is worth reproducing.

It was collected very secretly at Plymouth, and was to go under sealed orders. "When all things were ready, the Commodore had his instructions given him sealed up,

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with orders not to open them till he arrived in the Latitude of 40 degrees. Instructions were also given to Colonel Lillingston, for the regulating of his Conduct, and for giving him a clear View of the Extent of his Command. Before they set out for Plymouth, both the Commodore and the Colonel were separately exhorted to be extremely careful in keeping up a right Correspondence; because hitherto all our Expeditions had suffered more through the Weakness and Misunderstandings of our own Commanders, than through any extraordinary Courage or Conduct shewn by the Enemy; and that this might be the easier, their Commands were made as distinct as possible. The Squadron sailed from Plymouth, the latter end of January; but before they were in a condition to act, the Commanders had differed and all things were in confusion. . . . The first thing that was attempted was the Ruin of the French Settlement at Cape Francois: when the Fleet was arrived within sight of the Place, the Commodore absolutely prescribed the Place where the Land Forces should go on shore; and though Colonel Lillingston represented to him, that it was extremely hard to oblige the Troops to a March of five Leagues and an half, where by rowing one League and half, the Boats might land them close by the Fort which they were to attack; the Commodore only gave him the hearing, but pursued his own Project, and they soon discovered with what View. The English and Spanish Troops joined and continued their fatiguing March, till they arrived within five Miles of Fort St. Francois; where they saw the French blow up their Works and abandon the Place. When the Troops came up, they were surprised to find English Colours hoisted in the Fort, and a single Seaman left to attend them; But the Mystery was soon explained; Commodore Wilmot no sooner saw the Place abandoned,

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than he rowed ashore with 500 men, entered it, and carried off all that was worth carrying" ! It was then resolved to attack Port de Paix, which was besieged and taken. In the final stage of this attack, Lillingston, "as soon as he heard the firing (due to an attempted sortie), guessed at the cause, and immediately detached his Brother with 250 Men to support the Seamen (on whom the sortie was being made) : when Major Lillingston arrived, the Affair was over, and he marched directly to take possession of the Fort, in Order to secure what the French had left behind them ; and having posted Sentinels everywhere, and put the rest of his Men under Arms, he thought that all was safe ; but in this he was mistaken ; Commodore Wilmot, at the Head of his whole Corps of Seamen, followed him instantly. As soon as the Commodore came up to him, he clapped his hand upon his Shoulder, with this familiar Salutation : Now, Major, I am stronger than You. After which, he removed his Guards, broke open the Store-Houses, and carried off everything worth taking, with a dexterity (says Colonel Lillingston) very natural to Seamen." It can be left to the imagination of the reader to decide to which Service the writer of this account belonged !

The operations described above were only in the nature of preliminary skirmishes to the war of the Spanish Succession, which opened in 1702, and which was fought to prevent the union of the crowns of France and Spain.

The war was waged mainly in Europe ; North America was only slightly affected, and India and the East hardly at all. Its main interest, from the point of view of this story, lies in the Mediterranean, for the operations conducted there in the attempt to secure suitable naval bases, although quite overshadowed by Marlborough's victories

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on the Continent, had nevertheless more material results, as they definitely established England as a Mediterranean power.

Marlborough, to whom on his deathbed William III. entrusted the supreme direction of the war, showed himself as worthy to dispose of England's fleets as of her armies. This, it must be remembered, was her first great trial of strength with France, the most powerful nation in Europe, and Marlborough saw that the struggle would be long and bitter, and that victory was to be won only by the concentration in the European theatre of all England's resources, sea as well as land. He therefore insisted that her naval power should not be dissipated in distant colonial enterprises, but applied steadily and relentlessly, just as it was to be applied later against Napoleon and against Germany, to throttle the main enemy.

To do this, of course, meant command not only of the Channel, but also of the Mediterranean, and the want of a base in the latter sea was immediately felt. In those days fleets, like armies, went into winter quarters, and the lack of a Mediterranean base meant that an English squadron operating there had to return home, a distance of some two thousand miles, every autumn. To maintain, under such conditions, anything like undisputed command of that sea, or continual blockade of the enemy ports, such as characterized British naval operations in the Napoleonic wars, was clearly impossible.

One of the first measures taken, therefore, as soon as war broke out, was to despatch a combined expedition, the fleet under Admiral Rooke, the troops under the Duke of Ormonde, to secure a base. Its orders, however, were not clear, the two Services quarrelled as usual, and an attempt to take Cadiz failed dismally. "If

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it be true," wrote Colonel Stanhope, "that a house divided cannot stand, I am afraid it is still more true that an army and fleet, each divided against itself, and each against the other, can make no conquests." Rooke was returning home empty-handed, when a fortunate chance enabled him to make a sensational and very lucrative capture, in Vigo Bay, of the Spanish treasure fleet on its way back from America under French escort. This operation was really only rendered feasible by the soldiers, who landed and carried by storm the fort commanding the boom which protected the harbour. This timely victory, by which, according to an almost contemporary French historian, the naval power of France was so deeply wounded that she never recovered from it during the war, brought Portugal to the side of the Allies, and gave England the use of her harbours.

In the following year, 1703, therefore, an attempt was made to use Lisbon as winter quarters, but even this place proved, for various reasons, to be unsatisfactory, and the fleet was accordingly forced to return to England. Before it reached shelter, however, it was struck, off the Downs, and nearly destroyed, by one of the severest storms on record.

Meanwhile, the Allies had decided to put up the Archduke Charles of Austria as a rival candidate for the throne of Spain. Early in 1704, therefore, the fleet, still under Rooke, but this time without a military force, was again sent out, but with instructions to attempt nothing without the consent of the Kings of Spain and Portugal, "which was a discouragement to the Service," as a contemporary account states, "as those two princes could very seldom agree about anything"! After an attack on Barcelona had failed, Rooke, determined not to return home again empty-handed, summoned a Council



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of War, off Lagos, on July 17, at which the memorable decision was made to attack Gibraltar. The Council gave as the reasons for undertaking this operation: "Firstly, because in the condition the place then was, there was some probability of taking it; which in case it had been properly provided and had in it a numerous garrison, would have been impossible. Secondly, because the possession of the place was of infinite importance during the present war. Thirdly, because the taking this place would give a lustre to the Queen's arms, and possibly dispose the Spaniards to favour the cause of King Charles."

The Rock was certainly not at that time the formidable fortress which it became later in the hands of England. The fortifications were obsolete and in need of repair, and the garrison had been allowed to fall to a few hundred men. Rooke saw, therefore, that he had an opportunity to secure cheaply a valuable prize. He took no risks, however. Four days were spent in Tangier Bay in making careful preparations before he sailed for Gibraltar on July 21. The first step was, as Montague had outlined half a century earlier, to land some two thousand marines[1] north of the Rock, in the present neutral zone, so as to sever it from Spain. A complete surprise was effected, and the landing was unopposed. A formal demand for surrender having been refused by the Spanish Governor, the attack was ordered for the morning of the

[1] The Marines date from the Restoration, and were raised so that the Navy should always have a trained body of sea-soldiers for minor landing operations. It was for want of this, it will be remembered, that Gibraltar was not attacked in Cromwell's time. These particular Marines eventually became the 4th (King's Own Royal Regiment), 31st (1st Battalion East Surrey), and 32nd (1st Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), who all, as well as the two battalions brought in later, carry the battle honour "Gibraltar, 1704-5."

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23rd. All that night was spent in warping the warships into position, and at dawn a heavy bombardment was opened, which was maintained until midday. Under cover of this a landing was effected by the sailors on the new mole, the marines at the same time attacking from the north. By the evening, the garrison, demoralized by the bombardment, assaulted from two directions, and heavily outnumbered, surrendered. The capitulation was signed on July 24, the enemy being allowed to march out with full honours of war. The fortress was nominally taken over in the name of the Archduke Charles, but it seems to have been tacitly understood that England would eventually retain it. Thus Gibraltar fell into our hands, after the eleventh siege of its eventful history,[1] after only three days' operations, and at a cost of less than three hundred casualties.

[1] Gibraltar was seized by the Moors, under Tarik, in 711 A.D. as a base for the conquest of Spain. Its present name is a corruption of Gebel Tarik, or the Hill of Tarik. During its subsequent history it has undergone fourteen sieges, only five of which were successful. It remained in the hands of the Moors for nearly six centuries, and was then temporarily recovered by Spain, after the first siege, in 1309. The Moors, after an unsuccessful second siege, regained it at the third siege in 1333. Three Spanish counter-attacks were repelled (the fourth, fifth, and seventh sieges, the sixth siege being an inter-Moorish affair between the Kings of Granada and Fez) before it was finally wrested from the then decaying Moorish power after the eighth siege, in 1462. The Duke of Medina Sidonia seized it for himself at the ninth siege, but Ferdinand and Isabella brought it again under the direct rule of Spain, and an attempt by the Duke to retake it (the tenth siege, and the only bloodless one) failed. It was in recognition of its loyal defence on this occasion that the city was awarded its present seal, a castle with a golden key pendant, and the inscription "Seal of the Noble City of Gibraltar, the Key of Spain." This device is borne, with the motto "Montis Insignia Calpe," on the colours of those British regiments which took part in the fourteenth or Great Siege of 1779-83.

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Leaving Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, the representative of the Archduke, to hold the fortress with a garrison of marines, Rooke crossed over to Tetuan to water, but no sooner was this done than he had to move out to meet a relieving French fleet. The battle which followed, off Malaga, is interesting because it exemplifies the danger which a fleet incurs by operations against a coast fortress while the enemy fleet is still in being. Rooke had expended some fifteen thousand rounds in his bombardment of Gibraltar, and was consequently very short of ammunition. The action lasted all day, with indecisive results, but fortunately the French had had enough, and made off during the night, just as Rooke was wondering how he was going to continue the fight on the morrow.

This final effort, however, quite exhausted Rooke's resources, and, although it was clear that a counter-attack to retake the Rock was imminent, he was reluctantly obliged to return home. Before leaving, however, he took all possible measures to consolidate his capture. Hesse was left in charge, with all the marines, sixty ships' guns with naval crews, and sufficient carpenters and armourers to repair the fortifications, which the bombardment had, of course, rendered even more dilapidated than before. In addition a small squadron of the fittest ships, under Leake, a sailor who was to play a great part in Mediterranean history in the next few years, was dropped at Lisbon so as to be nearer the fortress in case of need.

The enemy lost no time in launching their counter-stroke. Even as Rooke left, a Spanish army was assembling. Before the end of September this was reinforced by some three thousand French troops and a siege train from Toulon, and the twelfth siege began.

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Fortunately the escorting French fleet did not remain to support the land attack, but repaired to Cadiz. The British Government acted promptly. As soon as the news of the capture had reached England Marlborough had been asked his views, and had replied that the place would be "of vast use to our trade and navigation in the Mediterranean, and therefore that no cost ought to be spared to maintain it." Acting on this advice, troops were at once despatched to hold what the Navy had won. The reinforcement was not large, but Leake, who escorted it in, remained to help in the defence, taking over with his sailors the defence of the new mole. He also rendered valuable aid by enfilading the enemy's trenches and harassing their camp at Algeciras. In December a second reinforcement of some two thousand men arrived, after narrowly escaping capture on the way. This gave fresh life to the garrison, which had been reduced to under a thousand men fit for duty. As a result, Hesse was able to relieve the pressure by some successful sorties.

Meanwhile, on the enemy side, Louis had become dissatisfied with the progress of the siege, and, much to the disgust of the Spaniards, insisted on sending one of his own Marshals, Tesse, to take command. Tesse saw at once that it was useless to continue to batter away at the land front of Gibraltar if the sea front was left open for supplies and reinforcements to enter freely. He therefore urged that the French Admiral, Pointis, should come out of Cadiz and help, remarking, caustically, that the English seemed to find no difficulty in keeping the sea in all weathers. Pointis objected to leaving his haven of refuge until reinforced, but was overruled.

On January 27, 1705, a heavy attack was launched from the land side, which nearly succeeded in effecting an entrance into the fortress, but a timely and gallant

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counter-attack restored the situation. Foiled in this, Tesse then began a deliberate bombardment, which soon reduced the town to ruins; but this proved to be the enemy's last effort. Pointis' fears were justified. In March, his inferior fleet was decisively defeated by Leake, and by mid-April the enemy withdrew, having lost over ten thousand men. The first attempt to regain Gibraltar had failed completely.

It is to be noted, before passing on to the next episode in Mediterranean history, that Rooke received no reward or thanks of any kind for the capture of the Rock. 1704 was also the year of Blenheim, and the eyes of the Queen and nation were fixed upon Marlborough. Rooke retired unnoticed into private life, and died before seeing his prize formally ceded. It has been left to posterity to do him justice.

Meanwhile, in 1706, further damage was done to the enemy's sea power by the capture of Ostend, with a Spanish garrison and a considerable body of French troops under Count de la Mothe, who, on his capitulation, undertook not to serve again for six months. One of the contemporary French writers pleasantly says: "It had been very happy for France had he undertaken for himself never to serve again."

Possession of Gibraltar, however, was not enough for the maintenance of the fleet. Invaluable as it was by virtue of its position, it was not a first-class harbour, a place where the whole fleet could shelter and refit, and it was impossible to maintain the stranglehold on France so long as the French fleet lay snug in Toulon, while the English had to return home every winter. There were two alternatives. Either Toulon must be captured, and the enemy thus deprived of his base, or else England must find a better harbour for herself.

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Marlborough had always been strongly in favour of reducing Toulon, but for a variety of reasons he was unable to bring off an allied attack on it until 1707, and then the attack, delivered by the Austrian Army supported by the English Fleet, failed. There was nothing for it but to seek another base, and the obvious answer was Minorca, for there is a local saying to the effect that "June, July, August and Port Mahon are the best harbours in the Mediterranean." Matters were brought to a head when the fleet, which had been kept out too long supporting the attack on Toulon, again met with disaster on its way home to winter quarters. A part of it was wrecked in the Scilly Isles, and the Admiral himself, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, after swimming ashore, was knocked on the head by a ruffian who coveted his rings.

This tragedy at last aroused the Government to the needs of the Navy, and in 1708, on the strong recommendation of Marlborough, a combined expedition was sent to capture Minorca. Admiral Leake was in command of the fleet, and General Stanhope of the troops, with Wade, afterwards famous as the roadmaker through the Scottish highlands, as his second in command. The troops employed consisted of the 6th Foot (now the Royal Warwickshire Regiment), some dismounted dragoons, and a train of artillery, all drawn from the Army in Spain, a battalion of Marines, and some one thousand seven hundred Spaniards, Portuguese, and Neapolitans. A landing was effected on the island towards the middle of September, and the capital, Cuidadella, captured with little opposition. Stanhope then marched on Fort St. Philip, defending Port Mahon, which was held by a French and Spanish garrison about a thousand strong. The guns, which had been dragged with difficulty along the rough and rocky roads, were brought into action, and

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by September 28 a practicable breach had been made in the outer wall. Stanhope had intended to stage the assault for the next day, but he was forestalled by the keenness of the 6th, who had been watching the bombardment, and who charged as soon as they saw the breach. Wade at once supported the attack, which was delivered with such dash that a lodgment was effected inside the fort. On September 29 the enemy capitulated. Minorca had thus been taken with surprising ease, in under a fortnight, and at a cost of less than fifty casualties, the success of the expedition being largely due to the excellent co-operation between the two Services. This, as has been seen, was a rather rare phenomenon in those days, and it seems a pity that Professor Callender, in his admirable book, *The Naval Side of British History,* should make no mention of the part played by the Army. To say, as he does, that the island surrendered at the sound of Leake's name, although "the works were stout, and the forts strongly manned," is, to say the least of it, misleading.

The Government of the day, at any rate, gave full credit to General Stanhope and his troops, for, in acknowledging his report on the operation, the Earl of Sunderland, then Principal Secretary of State, wrote to him in the following terms:

"SIR,

"I received on Monday the Favour of yours of the 29th of September N.S. by Captain Mayfer, with the welcome news of your taking Port Mahon; which, though it came at the same time as the News of taking Lisle, yet was not lessened by it; everybody looking upon the taking of Port Mahon as of the last Consequence to the carrying on the War in Spain; besides the other

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Advantages (if we are wise) we may reap from it, both in War and Peace. I cannot express to you the Sense the Queen and everybody here have of your Zeal and Conduct in this Affair, to which this very important Success is so much owing."

It is interesting to contrast the gratitude of the Government on this occasion with its apparent indifference towards Rooke's capture of Gibraltar.

Commanding the Straits of Gibraltar, and facing Toulon with Port Mahon, England was now as strongly based in the Mediterranean as either France or Spain, and her fleet was at last able to exert a continuous pressure, which contributed in no small measure to the ultimate defeat of the enemy. In addition, from 1708 onwards, the old policy of harrying the French coast was renewed, with the object of forcing the enemy to detach troops from the main theatre to protect his maritime towns.

Although, as has been said, the main theatre of operations in the War of the Spanish Succession was in Europe, there was fighting also in North America, which had important results. There France still controlled the mouth of the St. Lawrence, with her principal bases at Fort Royal, in Acadia, and at Quebec; as, although Quebec had been captured once and Fort Royal several times in the seventeenth century, on each occasion, to the disgust of the New Englanders, the conquests had been restored to France.

This time, however, Fort Royal changed hands for good, being captured by a combined British and New England force in 1710. It is interesting to note that there was so little doubt of the success of this expedition that, before operations even began, it was decided to re-

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christen the fortress Annapolis Royal, in honour of the Queen, while a Royal Warrant was also issued authorizing a special train of artillery to garrison it. This was the first permanent overseas artillery garrison, and the necessity for finding drafts for it, and later for the trains in Placentia, Gibraltar, and Minorca, was one of the arguments put forward for forming the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1716. The next year, 1711, it was decided to attack Quebec, and several thousand of Marlborough's seasoned veterans were sent out under General Hill, with a squadron under Admiral Walker. The expedition, however, came to a disastrous end, being wrecked in a fog at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, with the loss of eight ships and several hundred lives.

The war was closed in 1713 by the Treaty of Utrecht. It had been a great triumph for England. Her sensational victories had been scored on land, and the naval engagements had been few and tactically indecisive, but, nevertheless, her sea power had been securely established. "Before that war," says Mahon, "England was one of the sea powers; after it she was *the* sea power without any second." Important land bases for that sea power had been won. Gibraltar and Minorca were confirmed to her as well as Newfoundland and Acadia, which was rechristened Nova Scotia. Thus, both the doorposts of the St. Lawrence were in her hands, but the real keys of the great waterway, Cape Breton Island and Quebec, were left with France. The French fully appreciated their value, and in the former, at Louisburg, they at once set to work to construct a naval base to replace Fort Royal.

The next round of the struggle in North America, however, did not take place for a generation, but in the Mediterranean the position won by England was soon challenged. Although Gibraltar and Minorca had been

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ceded to her "in all manner of right forever," it soon became clear that neither France nor Spain had any intention of resigning herself to their loss. To the haughty Spaniards, in particular, the presence of an enemy fortress on their very soil was a standing disgrace, and throughout the rest of the eighteenth century we find them trying, whenever a suitable opportunity arose, to regain Gibraltar, sometimes by diplomacy and sometimes by force.

Spain's hopes were sustained by the fact that the value of the Rock was not in those days always fully appreciated by British Governments, although the nation proved to be wiser than its rulers. Between 1715 and 1783 the question of the cession of Gibraltar was raised no fewer than eight times. In 1720 a definite proposal was made to exchange it for Florida, then a Spanish colony, but public opinion in England compelled the Government to withdraw the offer. Seven years later the Spaniards, tired of diplomacy, made another attempt to regain the Rock by force, although the two countries were not officially at war. This "siege," however, the thirteenth in the history of Gibraltar, was doomed to failure from the start, because the enemy made the same mistake as before of attacking it from the land side only, without taking any steps to prevent its reinforcement and supply by sea. The siege was mainly a game of "long bowls" between the opposing gunners, the batteries on the north end of the Rock naturally bearing the brunt, but receiving considerable assistance from the fleet. Reinforcements arrived continually, bringing the strength of the garrison up to about six thousand, while supplies were drawn regularly from the African coast.

After lasting some four and a half months, the siege was eventually raised in June, 1728. The British

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casualties were under 400, while the enemy lost some three thousand, largely from desertion. It is sad to have to record that so old were the guns that they "were daily bursting in the batteries, by which accidents the garrison experienced more casualties than from all the fire of the enemy." No fewer than seventy cannon and thirty mortars burst in this way during the siege. Fortunately, the Spanish gunners seem to have been like the gunners of earlier days at the siege of Calais, of whom the contemporary ballad says :

> "Gonners, to schew ther arte,
> Into the towne in many a parte
> Schote many a fulle grete stone.
> Thankyd be God and Mary myld,
> They hurt nothir man, woman, ne chyld,
> To the howsis thow they did harm."

The Government had certainly not been half-hearted in holding the Rock against direct attacks, but no sooner was peace signed than intrigues for its exchange began again, and in 1729 both Houses found it necessary to petition George II. to preserve his hold on both Gibraltar and Minorca.

In 1732, with a view to isolating the Rock and facilitating future attacks, the Spaniards constructed a permanent line of fortifications, flanked by forts, across the neck of the Peninsula about a mile from the north face.

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## CHAPTER V

# THE DUEL WITH FRANCE (*Continued*)

## II. The War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War

In 1721 Sir Robert Walpole came into power, and under his rule England enjoyed the longest period of peace which she had in that century of wars. It lasted until 1739, when the high-handed policy of Spain, who was still trying to enforce her old monopoly in the Caribbean, and who had taken to searching and seizing British merchantmen in that sea in the most insolent manner, at last drove the nation, against Walpole's wishes, into the War of "Jenkins' Ear."

The war was not marked by any definite achievement in favour of British sea power. Admiral Vernon sacked Porto Bello by a daring raid, and a large combined expedition was then sent to seize Cartagena, Spain's main naval base in South America. It failed with ghastly loss of life.

Smollett, who was serving as a naval surgeon, has left us, in *Roderick Random,* a vivid picture of the operations. All chance of surprise was thrown away by the leisurely methods adopted. "Certain malicious people," says Smollett, "took occasion to blame the conduct of their superiors, by saying that they not only unprofitably wasted time, which was very precious, considering the approach of the rainy season, but also allowed the Spaniards to re-collect themselves from a terror occasioned by the approach of an English fleet, at least



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three times as numerous as ever appeared in that part of the world before. But if I might be allowed to give my opinion of the matter, I would ascribe this delay to the generosity of our chiefs, who scorned to take any advantage that fortune might give them even over an enemy." The outer forts were taken without much difficulty, though more by good luck than good management. "A breach being made," writes Smollett, "large enough to admit a middle-sized baboon, provided he could find means to climb up to it, our General proposed to give the assault that very night, and actually ordered a detachment on that duty. Providence stood our friend on this occasion, and put it into the hearts of the Spaniards to abandon the fort, which might have been maintained by resolute men till the day of judgment against all the force we could exert in the attack." "Had," he continues, "a few of our great ships sailed up immediately, before they had recovered from the confusion and despair that our unexpected success had produced among them, it is not impossible that we might have finished the affair to our satisfaction, without any more bloodshed; but this step our heroes disdained as a barbarous insult over the enemy's distress, and gave them all the respite they could desire, in order to recollect themselves." A most disastrous attack was then delivered against the inner fort. "Whether our renowned General had nobody in his army who knew how to approach it in form, or that he trusted entirely to the fame of his arms, I shall not determine," continues Smollett, "but, certain it is, a resolution was taken in a council of war, to attack the place with musketry only. This was put into execution, and succeeded accordingly; the enemy giving them such a hearty reception that the greatest part of the detachment took up their everlasting

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residence on the spot." The remains of the Army, reduced from eight thousand to one thousand five hundred, were then withdrawn on board. "By this time, the Daemon of Discord, with her sooty wings, had breathed her influence upon our councils; and it might be said of these great men (I hope they will pardon the comparison) as of Cæsar and Pompey, the one could not brook a superior, and the other was impatient of an equal; so that, between the pride of one and the insolence of another, the enterprise miscarried, according to the proverb, 'Between two stools the backside falls to the ground.'" The sufferings of the men must have been terrible. Their rations were execrable: "putrid salt beef—biscuit which, like a piece of clockwork, moved by its own internal impulse—and butter that tasted like train oil thickened with salt," rations given, no doubt, says Smollett, with a view to mortify the men "into a contempt of life, that they might thereby become more resolute and regardless of danger." The rainy season ushered in an epidemic of yellow fever, which finally compelled the abandonment of the enterprise, after appalling loss of life. "Such was the economy in some ships, that rather than be at the trouble of interring the dead, their commanders ordered their men to throw their bodies overboard, many without either ballast or winding-sheet, so that numbers of human carcasses floated in the harbour, until they were devoured by sharks or carrion crows, which afforded no agreeable spectacle to those who survived."

This expedition to Cartagena was probably the most disastrous failure of a period in which, as has been seen, failures in combined operations were the rule rather than the exception, and were, indeed, little to be wondered at in days when the two Services were never trained to work together, or even taught the rudiments of each

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other's needs. Well might Molyneux write, in 1759: "Our conjunct Armaments go out freighted with good Wishes, Blessings, and Huzza's; these they soon disburden, and have too often come Home loaded with Reproaches, Sorrow, and Disappointment. We call ourselves the Neptunes of the Sea, without knowing how, in many Particulars, to sway the Trident. . . . We are bewildered, 'tis true, not in a Wood but in a Deluge of Waters, which drowns our Senses; and before we recover them, so as to fix our Anchor of Understanding, the Opportunity is lost, and the Expedition frustrated."

The War of "Jenkins' Ear" merged into the War of the Austrian Succession, in which England was again forced to throw her weight into the scale against France and Spain in order to maintain the balance of power.

This war, so far as England was concerned, was essentially a colonial war. In Europe it was not marked by any event of interest, from the point of view of this story, although, in the Mediterranean, Port Mahon proved its worth as a naval base. In India and North America, however, there was fighting of importance.

In the East, England and France were at this time fairly evenly matched. England had a stepping-stone on the road to India at St. Helena, and three main bases, at Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, in India itself, besides a number of smaller trading stations on both coasts. Madras was the oldest of our Indian ports, Fort St. George having been built in 1640. Bombay, it will be remembered, had come to Charles II., with Tangier, as the dowry of his Portuguese bride, and had been given by him to the East India Company; the beginnings of the Company's Army had been made there, and at the end of the seventeenth century its garrison amounted

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to a thousand men with a hundred guns. Calcutta was founded in 1690, Fort William being named after William III.

France, whose East India Company had at first been a failure, but had been revived by Colbert, the great Minister of Louis XIV., had her main stations at Pondicherry and Chandernagore, and had also two useful stepping-stones at Madagascar and Bourbon. In 1715 she acquired another, which was to prove of the greatest value to her, in Mauritius, which had never been a success as a Dutch colony, and had been finally abandoned by them three years before.

The other chief points of strategic importance in the Indian Ocean, the Cape, Ceylon, and Malacca, were still in the hands of the Dutch; while to the Portuguese, the pioneers, there remained out of all their once vast empire only Mozambique in Africa and Goa and Diu in India.

The empire of France in the East was the work of two great Frenchmen, Dupleix in India and the Breton sailor, Mahé de Labourdonnais, in Mauritius. It was fortunate for England that they did not work in unison.

Labourdonnais came to Mauritius, or Ile de France as the French had renamed it, in 1735, and his ability and energy soon succeeded where the Dutch had failed. One of the chief troubles of the latter had been the runaway slaves, called Marons, who had established themselves in the forests in the interior of the island and from there carried on a harassing guerilla warfare against the settlers. Labourdonnais' first act was to bring in native troops from Madagascar and exterminate them. Having thus re-established internal security, he introduced sugar planting as the staple industry of the colony, which he soon set on the road to prosperity. But his ambitions went further. He saw, as Albuquerque had seen, that



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a European Empire in the East must depend on sea power, and his plan was to convert Mauritius into a strong base upon which French naval power could be securely founded. With this end, he built and fortified a new harbour in the north-west, Port Louis, to replace the old port and capital in the south-east, now called, after him, Port Mahébourg.

Unfortunately for France, he was unable to persuade the East India Company to share his views, the more so as his great rival in India, Dupleix, was opposed to them. Dupleix, who was bitterly jealous of Labourdonnais, aimed at building up for his country a vast dominion in India, and in his blindness saw no need for fleets or naval bases. France listened to Dupleix. Had she instead followed Labourdonnais' advice, and based her Indian Empire on sea power, upon, as Mahan has said, "free and certain communication with the home country instead of the shifting sands of Eastern intrigues and alliances," its history might well have been a different one. Certainly, England's task in overthrowing it would have been rendered far more difficult.

The two nations first came to grips in the East in the War of the Austrian Succession in 1744. Labourdonnais had foreseen the war, and had, for several years, been preparing for it. He had managed to obtain a small fleet from the Company, and had worked out plans for the systematic destruction of English commerce in the Indian Ocean. The Company, however, with an eye to their dividends, forbade him to begin hostilities, hoping to maintain the peace in the East in spite of the war in Europe. Labourdonnais' foresight was thus thrown away, and it was not until 1745, when an English fleet appeared off Pondicherry, that he was authorized to act.

He at once engaged the English squadron, which was

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inferior to his own, and badly handled, and forced it to seek refuge in Ceylon. Having thus gained local command of the sea, he attacked Madras, and captured it without the loss of a single man. This success, however, brought to a head the enmity between himself and Dupleix, whose jealousy could not bear the presence of his rival in India. Labourdonnais had agreed to the town being ransomed, but Dupleix repudiated the agreement, and a violent quarrel ensued, which was only ended by the wreck of Labourdonnais' fleet in a cyclone. Labourdonnais returned to France, where his enemies succeeded in getting him imprisoned in the Bastille. After three years' confinement he was liberated, but only to die shortly afterwards in poverty and oblivion. His work, however, remained. He had found Mauritius an unprofitable island; he left it not only a flourishing colony, but a naval base which was to prove its worth in the next half century, and which England was eventually to be forced to capture in order to safeguard her trade in the Indian seas.

Meanwhile the war went on. In 1748 England sent out a strong fleet, with 1,400 British troops, at that time a large force for Indian operations, under Admiral Boscawen. In order to avoid the disastrous quarrels between soldiers and sailors which had wrecked the attack on Cartagena in 1741, the troops were placed under the direct orders of Boscawen. It was intended to seize Mauritius on the way out, but the island was found to be so strongly defended that the attempt was abandoned, and the expedition pushed straight on to India. Arrived there, Boscawen at once attacked Pondicherry, but the rough and ready sailor methods, which had been employed with success in Vernon's raid on Porto Bello, failed when applied against well-trained

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troops under a leader like Dupleix. Boscawen was forced to raise the siege, after losing over a thousand men, and peace was made before a second attempt could be organized.

Meanwhile, operations of importance had been carried out in America also. It has been seen that after the loss of Fort Royal in Acadia, the French had set to work to build a new naval base at Louisburg. They had also extended their grip on North America to the Mississippi, for at the end of the seventeenth century La Salle had penetrated from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and had claimed the whole basin for France, calling it Louisiana in honour of his King. In 1718 New Orleans was built and fortified to guard its mouth.

The French policy was clear enough. Controlling the St. Lawrence at one end with Louisburg and Quebec, and the Mississippi at the other with New Orleans, they aimed at seizing the line of the Ohio to connect the two; and by thus drawing a cordon across the Continent, they hoped to confine the English to the seaboard and prevent their expansion westwards. The New Englanders, however, all men who had migrated to the New World in search of greater freedom in one form or another, were not likely to submit to this new curtailment of their activities without a fight to a finish.

When the War of the Austrian Succession broke out, there was no doubt in their minds about the objective. Louisburg had already proved a sore thorn in their flesh, for the French privateers, with a secure base under the guns of the great fortress, had been playing havoc with the Boston merchantmen.

To attempt its capture, however, seemed hazardous enough. The place was of great natural strength, standing on a promontory with the sea on three sides, and so

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large a sum had been spent on the defences of this "Dunkirk of America," as it was called, that King Louis is said to have asked whether the streets were being paved with gold. The New Englanders, however, greatly daring, decided, in 1745, to attempt the operation.

They provided the troops, some four thousand men under Pepperell, a Colonel of Militia, while England supplied naval co-operation, in the shape of a squadron under Commodore Warren, a sailor who had served for many years on the American coast and knew it well. The two commanders worked loyally together, the colonists made up, by their dash and determination, for their lack of military training, and the French Commander proved to be incompetent and faint-hearted. The fortress was captured with surprising ease, after a siege of forty-seven days, "perhaps," says Lucas, in *The Empire at War,* "the most brilliant feat of arms ever achieved by British Colonists."

Three British regiments were at once sent out to garrison the conquest, while the French despatched a fleet to retake it; but the latter was dispersed in a storm, and having no longer a base in Canada to repair to, was forced to straggle home in disorder.

The successful capture of Louisburg encouraged the Government to project the capture of Quebec the following year, but the preparations were so delayed that the season became too far advanced to risk the squadron on those coasts. In order to make use of the force collected, however, it was decided to make a descent on Port L'Orient in Brittany, where were kept all the ships and stores of the French East India Company, and which was one of the most important French bases. In spite of a very successful landing in the face of strong opposi-

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tion, however, the operation failed. The reasons given for the failure were rather remarkable. At the critical moment, we read, "the Commander of the Artillery forgot to order the Grate for heating the ball to be brought up;" then, "through the neglect of the officers to whose care it belonged, there was not a quantity of ammunition sufficient to keep up a continued fire;" and finally, the Commander of the Artillery, "being extremely afflicted with the gout, was not in a condition to undergo the fatigue of reconnoitring"! This combination of circumstances was too much, and the force had to be withdrawn, without achieving the destruction of the base.

The war closed by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, but it was one of those unsatisfactory treaties which settle none of the main points at issue, and it was clear that war was bound to break out again in a few years. Spanish claims to search British ships on the high seas, and French claims to the Ohio, were both left undetermined, while, worst of all, Louisburg, the key of the St. Lawrence, was restored to France in order to redeem Antwerp and Madras. This was not only a grave strategical mistake, necessitating a second and more arduous operation to recapture it ten years later, but it was also a serious political blunder. It was the New Englanders who had taken the fortress, and they bitterly resented its restoration by the Mother Country without any reference to them. It was mistakes like this, due to complete lack of sympathy with the Colonial outlook, which were slowly but surely preparing the way for the revolt of the American colonies.

In India, in spite of the official peace, the struggle between England and France went steadily on, the two

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rival East India companies automatically taking opposite sides in the endless series of native intrigues and wars. At first it seemed that Dupleix was gaining the upper hand, but the steadily growing resources of England, fed by that sea power which he had despised, and wielded by the genius of Robert Clive and Stringer Lawrence, gradually restored the balance. The French Company found their dividends dwindling under the constant drain of Dupleix' wars, and eventually, under pressure from the British Government, he was recalled in 1754, and his policy of aggrandisement officially renounced by his successor. Thenceforward, French influence waned while that of England increased, and the next phase of the long duel between the two countries, the Seven Years' War, saw the future of India finally decided.

The Seven Years' War began in 1756, only eight years after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was for England mainly an overseas war, and was the one which, more than any other, made the British Empire. She engaged the French in Canada and India, and left it to her ally, Frederick the Great, to fight them on the Continent.

The war opened with a disaster. The British garrisons in the Mediterranean had been allowed to fall below the limit of safety, and France decided to take advantage of this to rid herself of the dangerous hostile base at Minorca. Her plans were well laid. A display of great activity in the Channel ports succeeded in deluding the British Government into the belief that an invasion of England was intended. The result was that, in spite of reports from the Mediterranean of great preparations at Toulon also, no reinforcements were sent out until April, when Admiral Byng was despatched with a small, badly found squadron. It was too late. A few days after

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Byng left England, a French expedition fifteen thousand strong, under the Duc de Richelieu, with a strong fleet escort, sailed from Toulon.

The Governor of Minorca, General Blakeney, had been warned of the attack, and had done what he could to prepare to meet it. His garrison consisted of four regiments, the 4th, 23rd, 24th, and 34th Foot,[1] some artillery, and a body of marines, who had been left by the local British squadron before the approach of the superior French fleet had forced it to withdraw to Gibraltar. The troops totalled under three thousand all told, but more serious than their numerical weakness was their lack of officers. In each unit a large number of the officers were away, either on leave or on recruiting duties, the absentees including the commander of Fort St. Philip and all four regimental commanders. Blakeney himself was an old man of eighty-four and an invalid, and although he worked like a hero during the siege and never spared himself, he could not but feel the loss of so many of his principal subordinates. The French landed at Ciudadella on April 18th, Blakeney withdrawing to Fort St. Philip in order to concentrate his limited resources on the defence of Port Mahon. The French at once invested him by sea and land, and the siege began.

Meanwhile, Byng, carrying only one battalion, the 7th Fusiliers, as a reinforcement, arrived at Gibraltar, and it is an illuminating illustration of the state his fleet was in that the soldiers had to do duty on the voyage to augment the ships' crews. His instructions were to pick up another battalion at the Rock, but the Governor, General Fowke, feeling that his own garrison was already

[1] Now the King's Own Royal Regiment, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the South Wales Borderers, and the 1st Battalion The Border Regiment.

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too weak, and that it might be his turn to be attacked next, refused to part with one. He gave Byng, however, some two hundred and fifty men to replace the marines the Navy had left at Minorca.

With these Byng sailed on, and on May 19, after Port Mahon had already been besieged for a month, arrived off Minorca. His indecisive action with the French fleet on May 20, and his subsequent decision to leave the garrison to their fate and return to Gibraltar, is a well-known story.

With the departure of Byng's squadron vanished Port Mahon's last hopes of relief, and its fall was only a matter of time. Richelieu fully realized this, and had remarked to his staff, as they watched Byng's battle, that if the English Fleet were driven off, they could "continue the siege in their slippers." In spite of continual bombardment, however, Blakeney, with a daily dwindling force, held out for another five weeks, hoping against hope for succour, and it was not until the enemy, who had been reinforced, carried the defences by storm on June 27, that he was at last forced to surrender. The siege had lasted seventy days, and had cost the French some two thousand casualties. The British were granted full honours of war, and the survivors were shipped to Gibraltar.

The value set by the French upon Minorca is well illustrated by the fact that after its capture insurance premiums on cargoes leaving Marseilles dropped from between 50 and 75 per cent. to 15 per cent.

The news of the disaster stung the nation to fury, and moblike, it howled for a victim. Byng was offered up as a scapegoat, and paid for the Government's unreadiness with his life, "pour encourager les autres." Fowke was court-martialled for having refused to send reinforce-

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ments to Port Mahon, and although acquitted of all but an error of judgment, was dismissed by the King. Attacks were even made on the gallant old Blakeney, but his heroism was eventually recognized, and he was rewarded with a peerage.

It is interesting to note that this attack on Minorca took place before the formal declaration of war, which was not declared by England until May 17, and by France a month later.

The opening disasters of the war brought about the fall of the Government, and William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, came into power. At once, under his able direction, matters began to mend. France soon found herself, whichever way she turned, confronted by British sea power, while on the Continent her armies were held in check by the military genius of Frederick the Great, and her coasts and harbours harried by a series of combined expeditions. "These enterprises achieved considerable success," says a contemporary account, "if we consider the damage done to the enemy's shipping, and the object which the Ministry had in view—namely, to secure the navigation of the English Channel; to alarm the French King in such a manner as would oblige him to employ a great number of troops for the defence of the coast; to hamper him in the prosecution of his designs upon Germany: and to screen the Kingdom of Great Britain from all apprehension of invasion and insult." Probably the most important of these operations was an attack on Cherbourg, in which the harbour works were completely destroyed.

To redress the balance, France attempted to win the alliance of Spain by offering to hand over to her Minorca, and also to help her in another attempt to regain Gibraltar. Pitt's counter-offer, made in 1757, was to

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cede Gibraltar if Spain would assist in the recapture of Minorca. "It seems," says Mahan, "incredible that even the stern and confident William Pitt should have offered to surrender to Spain the watch-tower, from which England overlooks the road between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, as the price of her help to recover Minorca. Happily for England, Spain refused."

The Rock was soon to prove its value once again. France, foiled in her efforts to win an ally, decided, in 1759, to strike directly at England, and vast preparations for invasion were begun. The plan, however, depended on the junction of the Toulon and Brest fleets, and this was where Gibraltar proved once more the lion in the path. Admiral Boscawen, watching in the Straits, caught the Toulon squadron trying to slip through, and defeated it off Lagos, while in November of the same year Hawke gained his famous victory over the Brest fleet in Quiberon Bay. This was the Trafalgar of the war; after it there was no further fear of invasion.

In America also the initial operations had been unsuccessful. The first step, obviously, was to recapture Louisburg, and so deprive the French of their only naval base in Canada, and open up the road to Quebec. An attack on it was accordingly planned for 1757, and a force actually assembled at Halifax under Lord Loudon. Before it sailed, however, news came that the French fleet had reinforced the fortress, and the operation was abandoned as too risky. As soon as Pitt came into power a second attack was prepared, with all his energy and skill behind it. A strong combined force was collected, twelve thousand troops under General Amherst, with Wolfe as one of his brigadiers, and twenty-three ships of the line under Admiral Boscawen. Pitt, however, did not rest content with this; not only must the attack be

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strong, but the defence must be kept weak. The attempt against the fortress the year before had been ruined by neglecting to intercept enemy reinforcements. By establishing from the outset a close naval blockade, not only of Louisburg itself, but also of the French ports, Pitt made sure that this should not occur again.

The expedition, totalling some one hundred and fifty sail in all, was concentrated at Halifax, and after some delay sailed for Louisburg at the end of May. The special orders issued to the troops are full of interest, and a few extracts from them, as given in Duncan's *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, may be quoted. "No care or attention will be wanting for the subsistence and preservation of the troops, such as our situation will admit of. There will be an Hospital, and in time it is hoped there will be fresh meat for the sick and wounded men. . . . A body of light troops are now training to oppose the Indians, Canadians, and other painted savages of the Island, who will entertain them in their own way, and preserve the women and children of the Army from their unnatural barbarity. Indians, spurred on by our inveterate enemy the French, are the only brutes and cowards in the creation who were ever known to exercise their cruelties upon the sex, and to scalp and mangle the poor sick soldiers and defenceless women. When the light troops have by practice and experience acquired as much caution and circumspection as they have spirit and activity, these howling barbarians will fly before them. . . . The tents will be slightly intrenched or palisaded, that the sentries may not be exposed to the shot of a miserable-looking Mic-Mac, whose trade is not war but murder. . . . As the air of Cape Breton is moist and foggy, there must be a particular attention to the fire-arms upon duty, that they must be kept dry and always

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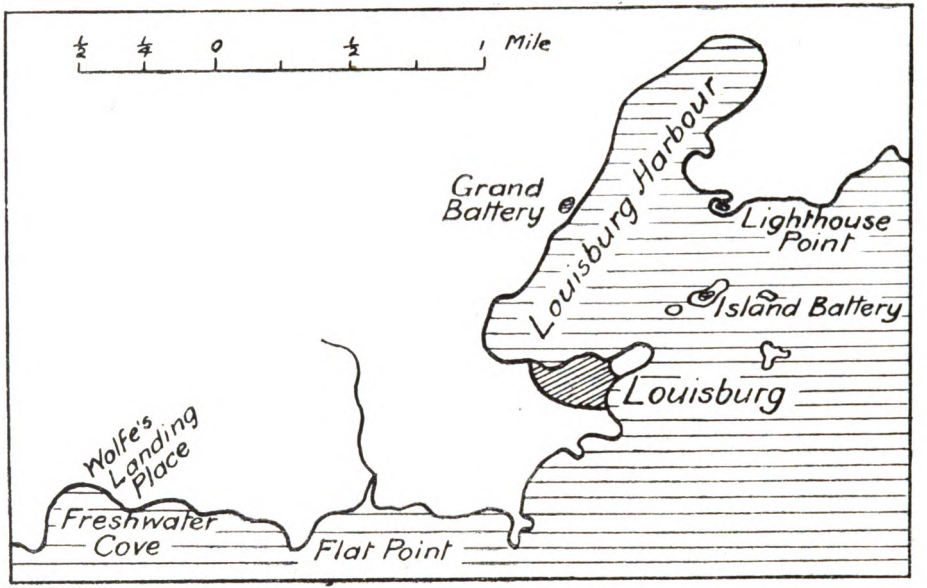


SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAPTURE OF LOUISBURG, 1758.

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fit for use." Such instructions show a care for the welfare of the troops, a desire to raise their moral, and a knowledge of the enemy and of the theatre of war, which are lamentably lacking in most earlier colonial campaigns.

The French garrison of Louisburg consisted of some five thousand men under de Drucour, a commander as gallant as his predecessor in 1745 had been pusillanimous. He was ably seconded by his wife, a lady who displayed the greatest activity and heroism throughout the siege, and daily fired three guns with her own fair hand. The defences of the fortress had been strengthened since its first capture, and now mounted over two hundred guns, while five warships, together with a number of frigates, lay in the harbour.

The expedition arrived in Gabarus Bay on June 2, but for several days all attempts at landing were foiled by the weather. On the 8th, however, Wolfe's brigade, in spite of a heavy surf and strong opposition, succeeded in getting ashore at Freshwater Cove, and, driving the enemy back on the fortress, enabled the disembarkation of the guns and stores to be begun at Flat Point. This proved a long and laborious business, and over a hundred boats were stove in by the surf before it was completed on June 25. The time, however, was not wasted, for the indefatigable Wolfe was sent to capture the outlying forts at Grand Battery and Lighthouse Point. Artillery was then established at the latter, which, with the help of the Navy, succeeded in silencing the Island battery, thus forcing the French warships back under the guns of the main fortress.

As soon as his stores were ashore, Amherst opened siege operations, which went steadily ahead, while Boscawen maintained an iron grip on the sea front. As the

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bombardment continued, it became clear that, owing to the rascality of the French contractors, the defences were not so strong as they appeared. Sea sand had been largely used in the fortifications instead of cement, with the result that not only each shot from the British gunners, but even the concussion caused by firing the guns of the defence, brought down large slabs of the crumbling walls. Three of the enemy ships were set on fire by the bombardment, and the remaining two surprised and captured, under the very noses of the garrison, by a naval raiding party.

For another week the pitiless bombardment went on, over eighteen thousand rounds being fired in all, before the last French gun was silenced and a practicable breach made. Then on July 27 Drucour capitulated, and the famous fortress, which was, says Corbett, "to France and her Canadian possessions what Port Arthur recently was for Russia in the Far East," passed for ever into British hands, and with it the whole of Cape Breton Island. The way had been opened to Quebec and the final conquest of Canada.

The siege was a model of co-operation, the two Services working together in the utmost harmony. "The Admiral and General," wrote Wolfe, "have carried on the public service with great harmony, industry and union. Mr. Boscawen has given all, and even more than we could ask of him. He has furnished arms and ammunition, pioneers, sappers, miners, gunners, carpenters, boats; and is, I must confess, no bad 'fantassin' himself." To this fine co-operation, as well as to the steady shooting of the British gunners, must be attributed the surprisingly small casualty list, which was under five hundred.

The defences of Louisburg were demolished, and the

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armament removed to Halifax, which thenceforward became the principal British naval situation in Canada. Louisburg was never again fortified.

With the only French base in British hands, there was small hope of overseas succour for Canada, and in 1759 the immortal capture of Quebec by Wolfe and Admiral Saunders sealed its fate.

True to the principle of concentration, Pitt allowed no diversion of force to the West Indies until Louisburg had fallen. Then, however, he decided to attack Martinique. He had two reasons for this. In the first place it was necessary to do something to protect the West Indian trade, which was far more valuable then than it is to-day, amounting to a quarter of England's total sea-borne commerce, and which was being sorely harried by French privateers based on Martinique and Guadeloupe. In the second place he was determined to get Minorca back, and saw that the best way to do so was not to attempt direct recapture, but to secure some possession of equal value to the enemy, for which it could be exchanged when peace was made. For this purpose also, Martinique, the capital of the French West Indies, and an island of great wealth, was well suited.

A force of some six thousand infantry and artillery, under General Hopson, was accordingly sent out in December, 1758, and after uniting with the West Indies squadron, under Commodore Moore, at Barbadoes, arrived off Martinique in January, 1759. The defences, however, were found to be stronger than had been anticipated, and it was therefore decided to attack Guadeloupe instead. This island was also a troublesome nest of privateers, and was as rich as Martinique, although less well defended. Unfortunately, Hopson was an old man and over cautious, and it was not until he

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had died of fever and been replaced by his young and capable second-in-command, Colonel Barrington, that the island eventually surrendered, after operations lasting over three months. The losses of the troops in action were slight, but fever, as usual, took a heavy toll.

The capture of Guadeloupe gave Pitt something in hand to bargain with, and nothing further was attempted in the West Indies until the conquest of Canada had been completed. Some eight thousand troops, under General Monckton, were then transferred from America, and the reduction of the remaining French islands was undertaken, in co-operation with the fleet under Admiral Rodney. Martinique, whose privateers had accounted for no fewer than 1,400 British merchantmen during the war, was captured in 1762, and the smaller islands fell without resistance immediately after. With the fall of these necessary bases fell also the system of commerce destruction which had rested upon them.

Meanwhile operations had been carried out in India as well. Pitt regarded these also as secondary to the campaign in Canada, looking upon them merely as the normal continuation of the struggle between the rival East India Companies; and, although he detached forces to the East, he did so only to enable the English Company to hold its own and protect its trade, and not with the definite aim of ending the French dominion.

The story of the operations in India is of interest, as it illustrates well the interdependence of fleets and armies, and the extreme difficulty of conducting a naval campaign without adequate local bases. For reasons of economy, that "penny wise, pound foolish" type of economy of which history teems with examples, the French had allowed their principal base, Pondicherry, to fall into disrepair, and the result was disastrous.

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A strong French expedition was prepared for the East, the troops under Lally, an Irishman, and the fleet under d'Aché. Their task was to destroy the English commerce; they were told to refrain from offensive operations inland, and confine their attention to the towns on the coast.

Fortunately, the expedition was slow in starting, and was long on passage, and the delay enabled Clive and Admiral Watson to finish their brilliant campaign in Bengal without interference. Calcutta was recovered, after the tragedy of the Black Hole, Chandernagore captured from the French, and Surajah Dowlah finally crushed at Plassey, before d'Aché at last appeared off the Coromandel coast. After landing his troops, he had to turn and meet Pocock, who had succeeded to the command of the British squadron, Watson having died of fever, and who had been reinforced from England. The action was indecisive, and both fleets had to withdraw for repairs, the British to Madras, the French to Pondicherry; and meanwhile Lally took Fort St. David. In August, Pocock engaged d'Aché a second time, and although the result was again indecisive, the French ships were so severely handled that d'Aché, finding that the resources of Pondicherry were quite inadequate, decided to retire to Mauritius. Even there, however, he was unable to find the stores and supplies he wanted, for Port Louis also had been allowed to deteriorate, and was no longer the fine naval base that Labourdonnais had left it. A whole year elapsed, during which d'Aché had to send part of his fleet to the Cape to get provisions off the Dutch, before he was ready to return to India.

During his absence, Lally attacked Madras, which was defended by Stringer Lawrence, but after about two months' siege the fortress was relieved by Pocock, and



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Lally, disheartened and weakening, had to fall back. In September, 1759, d'Aché reappeared. He was attacked by Pocock for the third time, and again so badly mauled that he was forced to return to Mauritius, this time never to come back. India was thus left to its fate, and the French army, without a navy to support its operations or bring it reinforcements, was doomed to destruction. Heavily defeated at Wandewash by Sir Eyre Coote in 1760, Lally withdrew with difficulty to Pondicherry, where, in January, 1761, cut off by land and sea, he was starved into surrender. Both Pondicherry and Chandernagore were razed to the ground.

Such was the price paid by France for neglect of sea power and of those local bases upon which sea power depends. Although at the end of the war her two main stations were restored to her, she never recovered from this defeat. Twenty years later, the greatest of her admirals, Suffren, attempted to restore her supremacy in the East, but it was then too late ; the British dominion in India was too firmly rooted to be upset.

In 1762 Spain foolishly joined France, too late to save her and only in time to share her defeat. She received short shrift from England, whose fleets and armies, under the able direction of Pitt, were now working together like the two fists of a boxer. A combined expedition sent to Cuba, under Lord Albemarle and Admiral Pocock, succeeded in capturing Havana, thus cutting the normal route between Spain and her possessions in the Gulf of Mexico, and intercepting the thin, but steady, flow of gold and silver which had become her very life-blood. The operation cost the Army dear, for, although the casualties in action amounted to only a thousand, five times this number died of sickness ; but its fruits were the equivalent of a great naval victory, for no fewer than fourteen

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enemy ships of the line were either captured or destroyed in the harbour. In addition, a vast quantity of merchandise and treasure was taken, the naval and military commanders' share of the prize money amounting to £120,000 each.

This blow in the West was followed immediately by an equally deadly one in the East, where a force, despatched from India, captured Manila. It is interesting to note that, as England had at that time no harbour of her own in the Far East, the final preparations for this attack had to be made at the Dutch base at Malacca, the Dutch, although neutral in the war, not daring to refuse the British demands.

The war was finally closed by the Peace of Paris in 1763. France disappeared from North America, ceding Louisiana west of the Mississippi as compensation to Spain; and England was thus left supreme in Canada as in India. Minorca was regained as Pitt had intended, but at a bigger price than need have been paid, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia being all restored to France. For Pitt had fallen from power, and the Government which succeeded him was too anxious for peace to secure the full fruits of victory. The Army had paid a heavy price in lives to win and hold these islands, and the restoration of all of them to France was a mistake for which a still heavier price had to be paid in the next war. Havana was returned to Spain in exchange for Florida, and Manila also, as the news of its capture did not reach England until peace had been signed.

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## CHAPTER VI

# THE DUEL WITH FRANCE (*Continued*)

## III. The War of American Independence

Disappointing though the Treaty of Paris was in some respects to England, it can be imagined that it was gall and wormwood to France and Spain, and both eagerly awaited a favourable opportunity for revenge. They soon found it in the revolt of the American Colonies. The initial operations of the War of American Independence have little interest from the viewpoint of this book. For the first years of their struggle the Colonists were never in a position to challenge England's sea power, and no help in maintaining it was therefore required from the Army. But when the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga finally decided France, early in 1778, to support the insurgents, and still more when her example was followed by Spain in 1779, the situation was completely changed. The problem that confronted England then was a very different one to that which had faced her at the beginning of the Seven Years' War. This time she had no allies to engage the attention of France on the Continent, and the result was that her enemies were able to devote their entire energies to the overthrow of her sea power, or, in their own words, of "that tyrannical Empire which England has usurped and claims to maintain upon the Ocean."

England's resources, with half Europe as well as the American Colonists thus ranged against her, were naturally strained to the utmost, and it is beyond doubt now, being wise after the event, that she attempted too



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much. In trying to hold on to her scattered possessions everywhere, she only succeeded, as always in such cases, in being weak everywhere and strong nowhere; and but for the poor strategy of her enemies, who, as Mahon says, could see no better way of employing their superior forces than "by nibbling at the outskirts of the British Empire, and knocking their heads against the Rock of Gibraltar," she might have suffered heavily from the war.

The success of the war in America depended, clearly, upon retaining command of the sea. Equally clearly, since the British Fleet was inferior to the combined fleets of the enemy, it was essential to do everything possible to lighten its task, to relieve it of all unnecessary responsibilities, and leave it, as far as possible, free and unfettered to deal with the enemy fleets.

The best way to do this was to review the overseas detachments, withdraw all that were not of direct value to the prosecution of the war, and concentrate on the defence of those that were.

As regards the Mediterranean, "Gibraltar," says Mahon, "was a heavy weight upon the English operations, but the national instinct which clung to it was correct." As has already been pointed out, its situation, cutting in half the naval power of both France and Spain, is bound to make it of great importance in any war against those countries, and although in this war no offensive naval squadron was based upon it, the potential threat of its position still remained.

It is very questionable, however, whether the attempt to hold Minorca as well was justifiable. The British Fleet was on the defensive, tied to the Channel and the Atlantic, and there was no question of operations in the Mediterranean. There was, therefore, no need, as there

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had been in earlier wars, and as there was to be again in the struggle with Napoleon, for a Mediterranean base. Port Mahon was thus not only of no value to the Navy, but was actually a source of embarrassment to it, as its reprovisioning was a constant anxiety. It might well, therefore, have been wiser for England to destroy its defences and abandon it, relying upon a victorious peace to restore it to her again, as in 1763. As it was, in trying to hold both Gibraltar and Minorca, she lost the latter and came very near to losing the former also. The enemy seemed to realize better the relative value, under the circumstances, of the two places, for Gibraltar was heavily attacked directly war was declared, while no attention was paid to Minorca until two years later.

In the Atlantic a policy of concentrating on essentials was even more necessary, for there the British forces were very widely dispersed. Besides the Canadian garrisons, there were troops in the American Colonies at Rhode Island, New York, Philadelphia, and Florida, and in the North Atlantic at Bermuda, while in the West Indies every little island had its garrison, adequate enough to preserve internal order, but quite useless against external attack.

The essential places to hold in North America were Rhode Island (Newport) and New York. These should at once have been properly fortified and garrisoned so as to relieve the British Navy of all responsibility for their immediate defence, and at the same time provide it with secure ports of refuge. With these two bases assured as well as Halifax, the Army could have held the line of the Hudson, and the Eastern States, thus isolated, could have been reduced as the first logical step in the campaign, with the full weight of the Navy behind the land forces.

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It is beyond the scope of this book to consider the operations in America in detail. The important point to be emphasized is that although the very existence of the armies depended upon the command of the sea, little attempt was made to assist the Navy in its task of maintaining it, or to adapt or limit the military operations according to the degree of naval co-operation which was possible.

The forces in the northern area were continually being weakened in order to provide expeditions to the Southern States. These detachments were thoroughly unsound. They had no true military objective, but merely followed the will-of-the-wisp of alleged loyalist support; while they entailed for the already over-worked fleet additional liabilities in the protection of fresh bases and lines of communication. The weakening of the forces in the north eventually led, in 1779, to the hasty evacuation of Rhode Island, because there were insufficient troops left to hold both that and New York. This, wrote Rodney, "was the most fatal measure that could possibly be adopted. It gave up the best and noblest harbour in America, from whence squadrons, in forty-eight hours, could blockade the three capital cities of America, namely, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia."

In the West Indies, also, the principle of concentration was violated with disastrous results. Apart from their intrinsic commercial value, which, as has been said, was far greater at that time than it is to-day, the West Indies were of great importance in this war as intermediate bases between Europe and America, to which the fleets retired when the armies went into winter quarters. In order to understand the campaigns there, the great, almost controlling, part played by the trade-winds in those days of sail must be remembered. The

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prevailing wind in the Caribbean blows, nearly all the year, from south-east to north-west, and it follows that the islands to eastward, or windward, possessed at that time a great strategical advantage over those to westward, or leeward. Not only were they stations on the natural line of communication to America, but they were of more value as naval bases because of the greater mobility they conferred on a fleet. From Barbadoes to Jamaica, for example, took a week, while to return, beating back against the wind, took at least two months. Fleets, therefore, sought their bases in the eastern islands, and were reluctant to go to the western ones except in pursuit of an enemy.

Under such conditions, a glance at the map will show that France was much better placed than England. In the leeward sphere her bases in Haiti, Cap Francais, and St. Nicholas, were to windward of the British main base at Kingston in Jamaica; while in the windward sphere her advantage was even more pronounced. She had three good harbours at Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia, while England had only Barbadoes, which, although the most easterly of all the islands, possessed no good anchorage, and Antigua, some distance to leeward. It was clearly necessary, therefore, to do something to improve the situation, and it was decided to capture St. Lucia. This operation merits description, not only because it was strategically well conceived, but also because of its brilliant execution. The force detailed for the operation, some six thousand men under General Grant, sailed from New York, under naval escort, on November 4, 1778. On the same day a strong French fleet, under d'Estaing, which had been operating on the American coast but had failed against New York and Rhode Island, left Boston for the same destination. The

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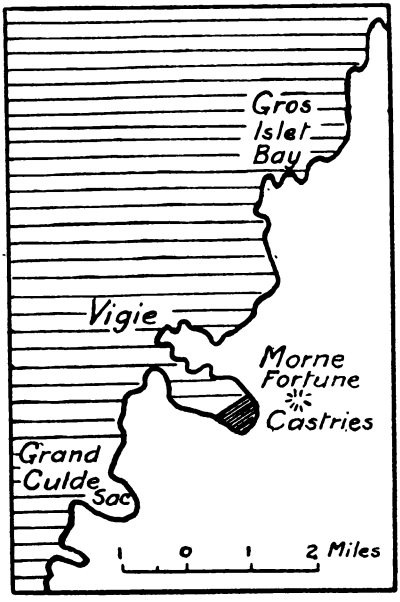


ST. LUCIA.

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British, by superior seamanship, won the race. Although encumbered with transports, they reached Barbadoes on December 10, only one day after the French reached Martinique, one hundred miles nearer, and effected a junction with a local squadron under Admiral Barrington. Barrington and Grant lost no time. Without allowing the troops to land, they sailed at once for St. Lucia, and arrived there on the 12th. A covering force was put ashore at Cul de Sac Bay, and soon captured the high grounds to the north of it. The remainder of the force was landed next day, and by the evening had taken Vigie Point, complete with all its defences, including about sixty guns. Castries Bay, a ready-made defended port, had thus been secured at a trifling cost, and Barrington was just preparing to move in there when d'Estaing appeared. The French Admiral had picked up nine thousand troops at Martinique, and was thus numerically superior to Grant, while his fleet was nearly three times as strong as Barrington's. Had he been quicker and caught the British expedition at sea, it could hardly have escaped destruction. As it was, after a half-hearted attack on Barrington, who had skilfully drawn his ships across the mouth of Cul de Sac Bay, d'Estaing moved north and landed his troops north of Vigie, so as to attack Castries Bay from that direction. Again, however, his superior numbers availed him nothing. His attacks were repulsed with heavy loss, over four hundred French dead being left on the field.

There is a very interesting account of this operation in the *Mémoires du Général Tercier,* who was a captain in the French forces. After the failure of the first attack, he writes that his sergeant came to him and said : "Mon Capitaine, on dit que le Comte d'Estaing veut encore attaquer les Anglais?" "Je feignis d'ignorer ces

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bruits," he continues, "lui disant que les généraux ne mettaient personne dans le confidence de leur projets." "Ma foi, Mon Capitaine," continue ce même sergent, "si on fait cette nouvelle tentative, M. le Comte d'Estaing n'aura pas besoin de vaisseaux de transport pour ramener les troupes à la Martinique, car il ne lui restera personne."

After this second failure d'Estaing hovered round for another ten days, and then returned to Martinique, upon which the remainder of the French garrison, who had withdrawn to the centre of the island, surrendered. This gave the British the harbour of Gros Ilot, at the north end of the island, a capture of great value since it looked straight into the main French base in Martinique, Fort Royal, and thus enabled a close watch to be kept on their activities there. The capture of St. Lucia, therefore, definitely improved the naval situation and was a correct employment of troops in aid of sea power. The prize had been cheaply won. The total British casualties were under two hundred, a testimony to the lessons in skirmishing and taking cover which the troops had learnt in America, while the French lost over a thousand. "A more brilliant series of little operations by both army and navy," says Fortescue, "under the favour of fortune, it would be difficult to find." It seems, therefore, a great pity that, here again, Professor Callender makes no reference whatever to the part played by the army. To state baldly, as he does, that this island, "fortified by the finest French engineers" and "regarded as impregnable," was captured by "a naval expedition under Admiral Barrington," without making any mention of Grant and his ten regiments, is not only to convey an entirely false idea of what the Navy can and cannot do, but also to obscure the greatest lesson taught by this

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little expedition—that of whole-hearted co-operation towards a common end.

No sooner, however, had St. Lucia been captured than the War Minister, Germain, did his best to lose it again, by ordering Grant to disperse his little army to reinforce the garrisons in the other islands. Fortunately, Grant was wise enough to see the futility of this order, and strong enough to disobey it. He saw that the safety of the West Indies depended primarily on the fleet, and that the best way to employ the troops available was not to scatter them in little packets all over the Caribbean, but to keep them concentrated for the defence of those islands which were of value as naval bases. The essential ones, in the windward sphere, were St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and Antigua, and Grant therefore wisely determined to hold these at all costs, even at the risk of losing the others. Most of the smaller islands did fall to the French in the next few years, but their loss was not important, and was due, not to the want of garrisons, but to the temporary loss of the command of the sea. Grant's good judgment was amply justified three years later, for it was, to quote Fortescue again, owing to his "firmness in holding on to St. Lucia at all costs, and to his boundless loyalty to the fleet" (in 1779 he provided two whole regiments to augment the depleted ships' crews) "that Rodney was able in 1782 to turn the scale of arms against France."

Meanwhile, the campaign was continuing in North America, where the interdependence of fleet and army was well illustrated by the operations at Newport (Rhode Island) in 1780. It has already been said that Newport was evacuated by the British in 1779, and in July of the following year a French force of five thousand men, under Rochambeau, escorted by a squadron under de Ternay,

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arrived there. They were at once blockaded by Admiral Arbuthnot, and General Clinton, commanding the Army at New York, was anxious to deliver an immediate attack. Unfortunately, Clinton and Arbuthnot did not get on well together, with the result that the necessary transports for the troops were not forthcoming, and the chance passed: for Rochambeau, although urged by Washington to come out and co-operate with the Americans in an attack on New York, decided to remain in Newport and to put it into a strong state of defence. He saw that the issue of the whole war hung on the maintenance of sea power, and that the best use to which he could put his small army was to ensure his fleet a secure anchorage. In September, Rodney arrived to reinforce Arbuthnot, thus giving the British local superiority, and it was then again proposed that Clinton should attack Newport and drive the French ships out into Rodney's arms. This time, however, it was Clinton who opposed the plan, as he said that the opportunity for a *coup de main* had passed, and that Newport had by that time been rendered impregnable. So Rodney left, and de Ternay's "fleet in being" remained snug in Newport, until in due course it was able to slip out, join the main French fleet under de Grasse, and play its part in the overthrow of Cornwallis at Yorktown in October, 1781.

This practically ended the war in North America, and the main struggle was transferred to the West Indies. In 1779, Spain, animated solely by the desire to regain her lost possessions, Gibraltar and Minorca in the Mediterranean, and Jamaica and Florida in the West, had joined France. Her entry into the war should have caused England to contract still closer her commitments, but instead of this it was the signal for a number of new adventures in Central America, all of which, as well as

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the reinforcement of West Florida, devolved upon the garrison of Jamaica. Owing to the terrible wastage from fever, which was inevitable in those days, this garrison proved quite insufficient for the task, with the result that first Florida and then the Bahamas fell an easy prey to the Spaniards.

The allies then planned a united attack on Jamaica, and a large French force, which was to unite with the Spanish at Haiti, was assembled at Martinique. It was then that St. Lucia, which had been safely held against two French counter-attacks, proved its worth. It was from the shelter of Gros Ilot that Rodney watched de Grasse preparing his expedition, and from there that he sailed forth to pursue and defeat him, in April, 1782, at the famous battle of the Saints, which at one blow both saved Jamaica and restored to England the command of the Caribbean. The fever-stricken climate of St. Lucia had cost the Army a heavy price in lives during the three years since its capture, but its retention had been amply justified.

Spain, as has been said, was determined to recover Gibraltar and Minorca, and, in fact, had made a special compact with France to allow no truce or peace until the former had been regained. Preparations to meet attacks were begun at both fortresses as soon as the American revolt began in 1775, but, at both, the garrisons were much under strength, and, in spite of urgent appeals, there were no troops available to reinforce them. In fact, in that year it was found necessary to withdraw two British battalions from each place for service in America, and to replace them by Hanoverian battalions. Fortunately, both fortresses had able governors, General Eliott at Gibraltar and General James

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Murray, who had successfully defended Quebec ten years before, at Minorca.

The expected blow fell on Gibraltar first. Communication with Spain was closed on June 21, 1779, and a sea blockade established a month later. The first shot, however, fired by the wife of one of the officers of the garrison, was not until September 12.

The British garrison, instead of the eight thousand which Elliott had asked for, was only about five thousand strong. It comprised five British regiments, the 12th, 39th, 56th, and 58th Foot (now the Suffolk, 1st Battalion Dorsetshire, 2nd Battalion Essex, and 2nd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiments), the 72nd Manchester Volunteers (since disbanded), three Hanoverian battalions, five companies of artillery, and about a hundred engineers. The artillery being only some five hundred strong, one of General Eliott's first cares was to train infantrymen as additional gunners. As many civilians as possible were evacuated, and those who wished to remain were warned that they did so at their own risk.

The siege, the fourteenth and last in the history of the Rock, and known as the "Great Siege," falls into three main phases:

(i.) From June, 1779, to April, 1781, a period of investment only.

(ii.) From April, 1781, to February, 1782, when the fall of Port Mahon released a large enemy force to swell the attacking army. In this phase continuous bombardment was added to investment.

(iii.) The preparations throughout the summer of 1782, culminating in the great combined attack of September 13, 1782. The repulse of this attack practically ended the operations, although the siege dragged on until February, 1783.

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About the first phase, in which the enemy tried to starve the defenders into submission, there is little to be said. The fortress was closely invested by land and sea, and by the end of the year, in spite of the daring running of occasional privateers, the garrison was feeling the pinch. Rations were reduced to the minimum, and famine prices obtained in the town.

Fortunately the Navy came to the rescue. In January, 1780, Admiral Rodney cleared the Straits by a battle off St. Vincent, and brought in two convoys, a Spanish one captured on the way besides the one with which he had started. In addition to food and stores, he had with him a British Regiment, the 71st Foot (now the 1st Battalion Highland Light Infantry), which Eliott retained, although it had been intended for Minorca. On board Rodney's flagship, serving as a midshipman, was the future King William IV.

After replenishing Minorca also, Rodney left in February, Eliott seizing the opportunity to evacuate all families not in possession of a year's provisions. On his departure the blockade was at once re-established.

The year 1780 wore on without any event of importance, but as supplies again became scarce, scurvy broke out and took a heavy toll of the garrison. It was no uncommon sight, says Captain Drinkwater of the 72nd, the historian of the siege, to see men, weakened by the disease but refusing to report sick, hobbling to their posts on crutches.

Meanwhile, during all the first year of the siege, while the defenders were thus holding the key of the Mediterranean safe for England, certain Ministers at home were engaged in a disreputable intrigue to exchange it for Porto Rico. Fortunately their efforts failed, and Eliott

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and his brave men were spared the humiliation of seeing the Rock sold over their heads.

The scurvy grew steadily worse, until in October a raid was made on a passing convoy, and one of the ships, a Dane, captured and brought in. This, by great good luck, happened to be loaded with lemons, the effect of which proved almost miraculous in stopping the disease. Moreover, a quantity of the juice was preserved, and lasted for the remainder of the siege, preventing any further outbreaks.

The enemy scored an important point at this time by persuading England's old ally, the Emperor of Morocco, to declare war against her, thus cutting off what had hitherto been a valuable source of supplies and intelligence.

1780 dragged on into 1781, provisions growing daily shorter, until in April the Navy, this time under Admiral Darby, managed to bring in another convoy. Infuriated at this second failure of their blockade, which had given the garrison another lease of life, the enemy at once began a violent bombardment. This lasted continuously for the next thirteen months, and in the first six weeks alone some seventy-five thousand projectiles were fired into the fortress. The town was soon reduced to ruins, but the losses inflicted on the garrison were surprisingly small, largely because Eliott, noticing that the fire always slackened at midday, the hour of the siesta, arranged to have the reliefs carried out at this time.

The bombardment, however, did cause, indirectly, a short but dangerous lapse from discipline. The destruction of the houses in the town disclosed a large quantity of liquor and provisions, which had been hoarded by the inhabitants, and the soldiers, infuriated at discovering this plenty in the midst of their own want, gave them-

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selves up for several days to an orgy of looting and drunkenness. It was only by ordering the summary execution of all caught in the act of pillage that Eliott eventually succeeded in restoring order.

The only other event of importance during the year 1781 was a most successful sortie carried out in November against the more advanced of the enemy's works and batteries, which not only did them great damage, but also had a most heartening effect on the moral of the garrison.

Meanwhile, in August, 1781, the enemy launched his long-expected attack on Minorca. The story of its defence is almost forgotten, and yet it was no whit less heroic than that of Gibraltar. The enemy's force amounted to some fifteen thousand French and Spanish, under the command of the Duc de Crillon, with a siege train of one hundred guns. Murray, on the other hand, had but four battalions, two British, the 51st and 61st (now the 1st Battalion Yorkshire Light Infantry and the 2nd Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment), two Hanoverian, and his gunners. Moreover, these units had already been several years in Port Mahon, which was a most unhealthy station, and the men looked, in the words of their commander, "more like ghosts than soldiers."

Like Blakeney in 1756, Murray decided to concentrate on the defence of Fort St. Philip. The siege began on August 19. Crillon, after an initial attempt to bribe Murray to surrender the fortress, which met with a well-merited rebuke, proved himself a generous foe. Before opening his bombardment on the 27th, he asked that all the English families should be evacuated. He tried at first to reduce the place by regular siege operations, but so little progress was made, and at so heavy a cost, that in November he was forced to fall back upon



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blockade. This was a weapon against which all the bravery of the defence was powerless; only the Navy could save them, and the Navy was fully occupied elsewhere. By the end of the year the inevitable scurvy made its appearance. Orders were issued for fatigue parties from every unit to gather herbs daily on the glacis, but little could be done to stay the disease, and the fever-stricken troops, cooped up in the foul air of the casemates and underground galleries, succumbed with terrible rapidity, while all the time the pitiless bombardment went on. The British gunners did what they could to reply, and earned the warm commendation of General Murray, but the duel was too unequal. No fewer than seventy-eight guns were knocked out by the enemy's fire during the siege. Still, however, the garrison held on, although with daily dwindling numbers, and it was not until February 5, after a siege of nearly six months, and after sickness and casualties had reduced his force to a mere skeleton, that Murray was at last forced to capitulate. Only "six hundred wasted, decrepit figures," says Fortescue, "crawled out to lay down their arms; and so pitiful was the sight, as they staggered between the ranks of the besiegers' army, that the hardest veterans of France and Spain could not conceal their compassion." The men themselves declared that they had surrendered to God alone, "having the consolation that the victors could not plume themselves upon taking a hospital."

The fall of Minorca released Crillon's army for Gibraltar, and preparations were at once begun for a grand combined attack by land and sea which it was hoped to make decisive. This ushered in the third, and most interesting, phase of the Great Siege.

In March, 1782, another small convoy succeeded in

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entering, bringing more troops, including the 97th Foot, stores and a number of gunboats in sections, which were to prove very useful. This reinforcement, with a company of Corsican volunteers who arrived a little later, brought Eliott's strength up to about seven thousand.

Crillon showed himself as chivalrous at Gibraltar as he had been at Minorca. As soon as he arrived he sent Eliott a courteous letter and a present of provisions. The stout old general, however, begged him not to repeat the gift, as he wished to have no distinctions in his little kingdom, and "to partake," as he said, "both of plenty and scarcity in common with the lowest of his brave fellow-soldiers."

The chief feature of the enemy's new plan was the employment of ten specially constructed floating batteries. They carried in all one hundred and fifty-four heavy guns, from ten to twenty-six in each ship, mounted all on one side, and protected by "armour" consisting of thick baulks of timber with layers of wet sand between, and with a cork lining to keep out splinters. Each ship was also provided, as a protection against fire, with a sloping roof of raw hides, which were kept constantly wet by an elaborate system of water-pipes. In fact their inventor, the French Engineer d'Arcon, claimed that they could neither be sunk nor set on fire.

The plan was to run these floating batteries close inshore to silence the defences, and then carry the Rock by a combined assault from sea and land. The fleet was to support the operation, and twelve thousand French were brought to reinforce the Spanish troops, bringing the enemy's total up to some forty thousand. So certain were the enemy of success that two Bourbon princes were invited to watch the grand finale.

The garrison realized that they were nearing the crisis

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of the siege, and worked with might and main at their defences. At the suggestion, and under the supervision of Sergeant-Major Ince of the Royal Engineers, the famous rock galleries were begun, while the Lieutenant-Governor, General Boyd, proposed the use of red-hot shot. A preliminary trial with these was made against the advanced enemy works on September 8, and proved so successful that braziers for heating shot were installed at every battery.

After a preparatory bombardment of four days, the great attack was finally launched at daylight on September 13. The enemy fleet, owing to an adverse wind, was unable to stand inshore near enough to assist, but otherwise the attack began according to plan. The floating batteries were run in and anchored within one thousand yards of the King's Bastion, and about 9 a.m. the artillery duel began, some four hundred of the heaviest pieces of those days being in action at once. Eliott, being considerably outgunned, wisely decided to neglect the enemy's shore artillery and concentrate on the floating batteries. At first these appeared to be all that their inventor had claimed, but gradually the steady and accurate shooting of the British gunners, and the red-hot shot, began to tell, and at last, about 2 p.m., smoke was seen issuing from one of them. Heartened by this, and encouraged by old Eliott, who spent the day striding up and down on the King's Bastion in the thickest of the fight, the gunners redoubled their efforts. It was as if, as Carlyle puts it in his picturesque language: "Calpe had become a throat of the Pit, and utters such a Doom's-blast of a NO as all men must credit." All through the afternoon and evening they toiled, although so exhausted that they drank the water with which they had sponged out the guns, and then, partially relieved by sailors, continued on into the

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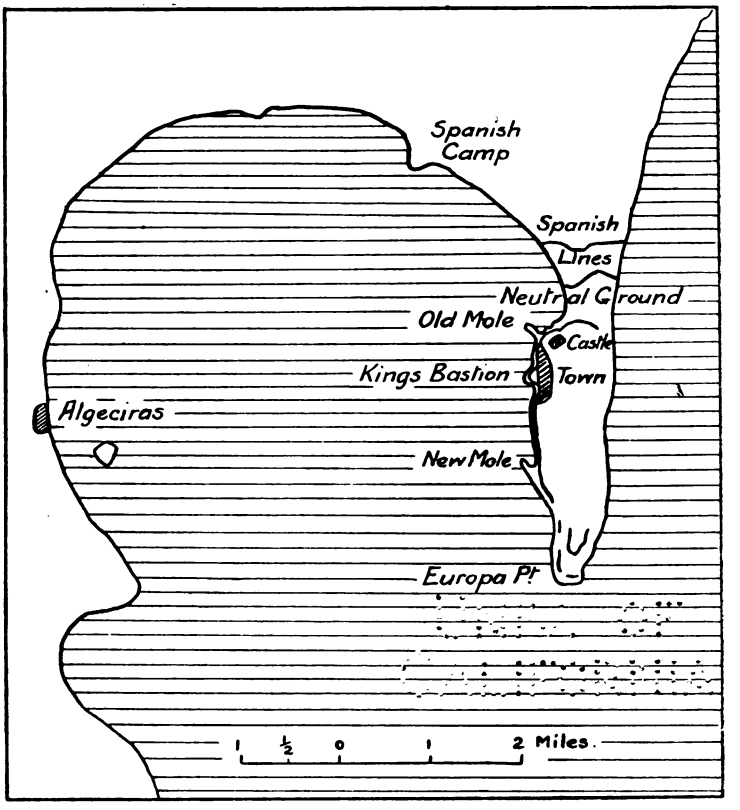


SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE GREAT SIEGE OF GIBRALTAR.

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night. By early morning of the 14th, half the floating batteries were blazing fiercely, making the Bay as light as day, and Captain Curtis, R.N., sallying out with the naval gunboats, completed their confusion. By noon they had all been destroyed, and the great attack was over.

The day had been a great triumph for the Royal Artillery, who, in spite of the heavy odds against them, had worked their guns for more than twenty-four hours continuously, expending eight thousand shot and over seven hundred barrels of powder; and, by demolishing the floating batteries upon which the enemy had pinned such faith, had prevented the actual assault from ever materializing.

The failure of this attack took the heart out of the enemy, although they still maintained the blockade. When in October, however, Lord Howe brought relief for the third time, they gave up hope. Investment, bombardment, combined attack, all had failed. The siege dragged on into 1783, but it was half-hearted, and negotiations for peace had already been begun. Early in February news was received that the preliminaries had been signed; on the 5th the last shot was fired; and on the 6th, after a duration of three years seven months and twelve days, the Great Siege came to an end.

This defence of Gibraltar shows that coast fortresses need have no fears, however strongly attacked, provided that two conditions are fulfilled. Firstly, the garrison must be strong enough to hold out until relief can be brought by the fleet, this period before relief depending of course upon the strategical situation and the geographical position of the fortress. Secondly, the fleet must be able to bring this relief.

Gibraltar had fallen to England in 1704 because the

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first of these two conditions had not been fulfilled; its garrison had been allowed to fall so low that it could not hold out even for the few days necessary to bring the fleet to its help. Minorca was twice taken from England, in spite of a heroic defence on each occasion, because the fleet had been unable to effect relief within the time expected.

The real key to the capture of Gibraltar was not vast armies or floating batteries, but a decisive victory over the British fleet. Had the French and Spaniards concentrated every effort on this, instead of allowing the fortress to be relieved three times and knocking their heads against its defences in the intervals between relief, Gibraltar, like Minorca, must inevitably have succumbed eventually to exhaustion.

As soon as hostilities were over, visits were exchanged between Eliott and Crillon, the latter, on his arrival, being heartily cheered by the British troops, which, says Drinkwater, "greatly confused him," until it was explained to him that it was their customary way of expressing welcome. He was especially complimentary to the officers of the artillery, remarking: "Gentlemen, I would rather see you as friends than on your batteries as enemies, where you never spared me."

The Great Siege is certainly not one of the least of the honours summed up in the motto "Ubique" of the Royal Regiment. The gunners lost 40 per cent. of their strength, and received the special commendation of the King. At the end of the siege no fewer than 450 guns were mounted, ranging from 32-pounders to 3-pounders, besides 28 howitzers, the largest of 10-inch calibre, and 70 mortars. During the whole siege over 200,000 rounds were expended.

The total British casualties from all causes were some

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two thousand. The siege was remarkable, not only for the gallantry of the defenders, but for the great fertility of resource displayed by them. Old Eliott himself, the "Cock of the Rock," was the life and soul of the defence. He was over sixty when the siege began, but thanks, perhaps, to his abstemious habits, for he was a teetotaler and a vegetarian, he withstood its rigours and hardships as well as anyone. His methods of maintaining discipline and discouraging "croakers" were original, but efficacious. "One 58th man," writes Captain Spilsbury of the 12th, in his diary, "was overheard saying that if the Spaniards came, damn him that would not join them. The Governor said he must be mad, and ordered his head to be shaved, to be blistered, bled, sent to the Provost on bread and water, wear a tight waistcoat, and to be prayed for in church." Another, who dreamt that the fortress would fall on a certain day, was sentenced to be imprisoned till the date arrived, and then soundly flogged.

Eliott was ably supported by his second-in-command, General Boyd, who, as has been said, first advocated the use of red-hot shot, and who planned the King's Bastion, where he lies buried; by General Green, the Chief Engineer; by Major Kohler, a German officer of the artillery, who designed a special gun-carriage for firing downwards from the Rock at extreme angles of depression; and, last but not least, by Captain Curtis, of the Royal Navy; while Sergeant-Major Ince, of the Engineers, has left a permanent memorial of himself in the Rock Galleries.

The defence of Gibraltar, which was incidentally the only striking success achieved by our armies during the War of American Independence, roused the pride and sentiment of the nation. The garrison was paraded to

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receive the special thanks of Parliament, while Eliott was made a Knight of the Garter, and later created Lord Heathfield. But more important than this, the Government at last plucked up courage to tell Spain outright that England would never, under any conditions, consent to relinquish the fortress, and no formal proposals to cede or exchange it have ever been made since, nor has it since been attacked. That Spain, however, continued to intrigue for its recovery, and that the garrison could never relax its watchfulness, is shown by the following letter written to the Governor by Castlereagh in 1805:

"I think it right to apprize you that secret information has been received that every effort will be made by the Prince of Peace for the recovery of Gibraltar to Spain by force, by surprise, or by treachery.

"An agent, whom he meant to employ, has recently had several interviews with him at Aranjuez. The Prince gave him a paper signed by himself, promising half the property of the fortress to such of the garrison as would join in betraying the place, and a gratuity of £100,000 to those who should effect its surrender. An agent was to go to Gibraltar with this proposal, who was to correspond with the General Commanding at Cadiz. A scheme of taking off the garrison of Gibraltar and the chief officers by poison was mentioned; another was to take advantage of a great festival to get the garrisons as much intoxicated as possible, when a party was to spike the guns of the chief batteries, and an attempt to be made for surprising the town. The Prince of Peace said that he had a person in his pay whilst General Sir T. Trigge was in the garrison; and he mentioned that the attempt of which you gave an account in January last was true.

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"The information adds that a very large force was prepared against Gibraltar, and that General Moreau was employed by the Spaniards.

"You will preserve entire secrecy as to the channel through which this information comes, and as to the point of an agent having been appointed to carry offers to Gibraltar, lest such particulars being public might affect the channel of intelligence; but you will make use of this notice for the purpose of increasing vigilance, watching the disposition of the garrison, and the appearance of suspicious strangers, or the conduct of suspected residents."

In the meantime operations of considerable importance had been carried out in other theatres. In India, Warren Hastings, who was then Governor-General, lost no time. The moment the news of the declaration of war reached Calcutta in July, 1778, he launched attacks on all the French stations. Chandernagore, undefended by the terms of the Treaty of Paris, fell at once, Pondicherry after a siege of seventy days, Mahé in March, 1779. In less than a year, therefore, the French flag had disappeared from India, while the British squadron, under Admiral Hughes, held undisputed command of the surrounding seas.

The situation remained like this for two years, France being too fully engaged in the Mediterranean and Atlantic to spare forces for the East. In 1781, however, she sent out a strong fleet under the ablest of her admirals, Suffren, and made what proved to be her last attempt to dispute the mastery of India. To prepare the way, the Mahrattas and Hyder Ali of Mysore were incited by French agents to declare war against the English.

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Before, however, dealing with Suffren's brilliant campaign in the Indian seas, it is necessary to glance for a moment at the Cape, and record our first abortive attempt to capture it. In December, 1780, in order to stop supplies reaching the Americans in Dutch bottoms, England was forced to declare war on Holland, and decided to turn the additional liability into an asset by seizing her Eastern colonies, which were known to be weakly held.

A squadron under Commodore Johnstone, with some three thousand troops, was accordingly despatched from England in March, 1781, to capture the Cape. France, however, got wind of the expedition, and Suffren, then about to start for the East, was ordered to convoy a reinforcement to the Cape before passing on to India. Johnstone started first, but, on reaching the Cape Verde Islands, put in to water. There Suffren, arriving with the same object a few days later, found him at anchor and unprepared, and, violating Portuguese neutrality, at once attacked. The action was rendered indecisive by the incompetence of the French captains, but it delayed Johnstone sufficiently to enable Suffren to forestall him at the Cape, and land there the reinforcements he had brought for the Dutch garrison. Johnstone, arriving a fortnight later, decided that an attack was no longer feasible, and, sending his battleships on to join Hughes in the Indian Ocean, returned himself to England.

Meanwhile, in India, the Dutch possessions of Negapatam and Trincomali in Ceylon had been successfully seized. Trincomali was at that time of great value, not only on account of its fine harbour, which was the only secure one on the East Coast of India during the north-east monsoon, but also because of its strategic position to windward of the Coromandel coast, which was

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the main theatre of war. It was captured in January, 1782, by a combined expedition sent from Madras, the fleet under Admiral Hughes and the troops, a small, mixed force of Europeans and Indians, under Sir Hector Munro. The remainder of the Dutch stations in Ceylon were not attacked.

When, therefore, Suffren, after a voyage of nearly a year, arrived in Indian waters, he found all the French and Dutch naval bases in English hands, and himself with no refuge nearer than Mauritius. It was an even worse situation than that which had confronted d'Aché during the Seven Years' War, but Suffren was a man of different calibre. His quick eye saw at once the weak point in the English position—Trincomali. Since it had only just been captured, there had been no time to organize a proper defence, and its safety, therefore, depended entirely upon the Navy: the first principle in the establishment of a naval base, that it should be able to defend itself and so leave the fleet free to operate, had thus been violated. "The dependence," says Mahan, "of Trincomali upon the English fleet in this campaign affords an excellent illustration of the embarrassment and false position in which a navy finds itself when the defence of its sea-ports rests upon it. . . . Trincomali, unfortified, was simply a centre round which Hughes had to revolve like a tethered animal; and the same will always happen under like conditions."

There ensued a most interesting naval campaign, to follow which in detail is beyond the scope of this book. Three actions were fought between Hughes and Suffren, all of which were indecisive, the incompetence of the latter's captains neutralizing his genius and superior strength. After the third of these battles, on July 6, 1782, the English fleet, which had suffered heavily in

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spars and sails, had to withdraw to Madras to refit, and Suffren seized his chance. Appearing at Trincomali on August 25, he rapidly threw his troops ashore, and pressed the assault with such vigour that on the 31st the inadequate garrison was forced to surrender.

Hughes came to the rescue two days too late, but at once attacked Suffren, and a fourth indecisive action took place, after which both fleets, badly mauled, had to retire to their bases for repairs. As the north-east monsoon was then blowing, the English, having lost Trincomali, had no option but to withdraw to Bombay, and Suffren was thus left in undisputed command of the east coast.

So far, therefore, the honours were with the French, who, starting with nothing, had captured a base and driven their enemy away. Their success, however, was only transitory, for in India the British armies were steadily disposing of their foes, and England's superior local resources were slowly but surely turning the scale. Had France had a Suffren in the Seven Years' War the story might have been different, but, as it was, the dice were loaded too heavily against her, and Suffren's genius, like that of Lee in the American Civil War, only served to prolong a losing fight. His ingenuity and skill in keeping his fleet seaworthy without a base (in the days before he had taken Trincomali) were nothing short of marvellous, although, of course, such a feat would not be possible to-day when requirements are more complicated. He found timber for repairs by stripping his smaller ships and his English prizes, and even by pulling down houses ashore, all repairs being carried out in open roadsteads on the Cormomandel coast; while to replace casualties in his crews he drew upon soldiers and natives. Suffren refused to use Mauritius, for fear of

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spoiling his men. "Ce pays-ci," he wrote, "amollit, Il y'a une quantité de jolies femmes et une façon de vivre fort agréable."

The war was closed in 1783 by the Treaty of Versailles, by which the independence of the United States of America was conceded. In the West, St. Lucia was again restored to France, and Florida to Spain, England in return receiving back all the smaller islands she had lost, except Tobago. In the Mediterranean, Minorca was ceded to Spain, while, in the East, France received back her Indian stations, and Holland Trincomali. The war had, however, shown clearly that Holland was no longer able unaided to hold her foreign possessions. She had owed her retention of both the Cape and Trincomali entirely to her French allies, and it was evident that, if she again went to war with England and outside aid were not forthcoming, her overseas bases would be at England's mercy.

The war of American Independence had important results for Bermuda. Both Washington and the French had contemplated its capture for use as a base for privateers, and though the attack never materialized, it brought home to England the strategic importance of the island, and eventually led to the construction of a naval dockyard there.

In 1784, the younger Pitt came into office, at the age of twenty-four. He was not a great War Minister like his father, but British sea power, nevertheless, owes something to him, for one of his first cares was for the greater security of the naval bases. In 1786 he introduced a resolution affirming the principle that all naval bases should be fortified and garrisoned so that the fleet in war should not be tied down to their local defence, but set free to seek out and engage the enemy fleets. It is

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astounding to find that this proposition, which to-day is accepted as an axiom, was made a party question, and eventually rejected. Fox and the Opposition based their objections to it on the argument that to find the necessary garrisons would necessitate an increase in the standing army, and thus be a menace to the Constitution. "One gentleman," says Fortescue, "observed in a phrase of immortal imbecility, 'fortifications might be termed seminaries of soldiers, and universities of prætorian bands.'" Pitt, however, stuck to his guns, and, transferring the question from theory to practice, demanded and obtained, both in 1787 and in 1789, money to strengthen the defended ports; while, in addition, in order that the armament should receive proper care, he instituted a regular corps of trained artificers.

It was certainly high time that something was done to improve the status of the overseas garrisons, which in the first half of the eighteenth century had been in a most lamentable state. The policy adopted originally had been frankly hand-to-mouth. As each new colony or overseas base was acquired, an "independent company" had been raised for its defence. Later these companies had been amalgamated into battalions, but there the matter had remained for many years. There had been no attempt to consider the problem of imperial defence as one connected whole, into which all the overseas bases could be fitted, each with a garrison suited to its value and its needs. There was no attempt at any system of regular reliefs; troops were left to rot for years in the stations, often thoroughly unhealthy, for which they had been originally raised. The 38th Foot, for example, remained half forgotten in the Leeward Isles for sixty years. The gunners seem to have been better off as regards reliefs than the infantry, as there were

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regular trains of artillery stationed at the more important coast fortresses, but on the other hand they suffered, as has been seen in the case of Gibraltar, from armament which was not only obsolete but positively dangerous to fire. Nor was there any attempt made to care for the welfare of the men. They were badly housed, badly clothed, and badly fed, and their pay was generally months in arrears. Bermuda complained in 1739 that no stores had been received for forty years; while the most hardened criminal, says Fortescue, could hope for pardon if he enlisted for Jamaica. Under such conditions, which seem almost incredible to us to-day, there is little wonder that the ranks of the overseas garrisons were filled with bad characters, and that desertion was often regarded as the only means of escape from an intolerable exile. In Gibraltar the discontent eventually culminated, during the Seven Years' War, in a plot by some of the infantry garrison, who had been years in the place and saw no hope of relief, to mutiny, shoot their officers, plunder the town, and then hand it over to Spain as the price of escape. Fortunately a tavern brawl led to the discovery of the plot, and it was suppressed before any harm was done.

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## CHAPTER VII

# THE DUEL WITH FRANCE (*Continued*)

## IV. The Wars with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France

### (1793—1802)

The Treaty of Versailles secured only ten years of peace, for in 1793 began the last round in the long duel between England and France, opening with the war against the French Revolutionaries, and then merging into the greater struggle against Napoleon. As usual, England had been lulled to sleep by her political prophets, and was quite unprepared. Speaking in February, 1792, the younger Pitt, then Prime Minister, had said: "Unquestionably there never was a time in the history of this country when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than at the present moment." Actually, England was on the threshold of the most desperate struggle she had ever waged, a struggle which was to last, with only a few brief interludes of peace, until 1815.

Pitt hoped at first to remain neutral in the upheaval caused by the French Revolution, but the aggressive policy of the Revolutionary leaders, very similar to that of the rulers of Soviet Russia in our own day, whose sole aim was to foment trouble in every country, soon rendered neutrality impossible, and war was eventually declared in February, 1793.

"Pitt," says Trevelyan, "regarded the world crisis as



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a repetition, under changed political conditions, of the Seven Years' War, and he accordingly hoped to fight, as his father had done before him, for naval supremacy and colonial conquest, while sending over a few British troops and much British money to enable our allies to maintain themselves in Europe." Unfortunately the conditions were not the same. They approximated more to those of the struggle of a century earlier against Louis XIV., or to those of a century later against Germany; for the enemy's object was the domination of Europe. Nor was there any Frederick the Great to lead the allies on the Continent, while France herself was soon to find a greater leader than Frederick. Under such circumstances England's part could not be confined to colonial conquests; it was only by the ruthless application of her whole power against France herself that victory was to be won.

It is easy, however, to be wise after the event. Pitt could not foresee the future, and in any case there is no doubt that his policy of capturing the enemy's overseas bases, from which in past wars her privateers had preyed on British shipping, was a necessary step towards the safeguarding of England's trade, upon which her "sinews of war" depended. Such, at any rate, is the opinion of Mahan. "In a contest," he says, "between equal navies for the control of the sea, to waste military effort upon the capture of small islands, as the French did in 1778, is a preposterous misdirection of effort; but when one navy is overwhelmingly preponderant, as the British was after 1794, when the enemy confined himself to commerce destroying by crowds of small privateers, then the true military policy is to stamp out the nests where they swarm." The fault was not in the policy but in its execution. The younger Pitt, unfortunately, had



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neither his father's personal genius for war nor his skill in selecting and inspiring subordinates. He entrusted the actual planning and preparation of operations to his War Minister, Henry Dundas, and Dundas proved himself quite unworthy of the trust. The fatal combination of unpreparedness and misdirection led inevitably to an initial string of failures.

It was decided that the first blow should be struck in the West Indies, where local conditions were especially favourable to the French *guerre de course*. But the difficulties of the proposed operations were seriously under-estimated. It was necessary not only to capture the French islands but to hold them, and in those days, when the life of a British battalion in the Caribbean was two years at most, the provision of the garrisons required was no light matter. For it was no longer a case, as in the last war, of holding only a few of the essential naval bases and relying on the fleet for the rest. The doctrines of the French Revolution had been eagerly absorbed by the negro population, which then, as now, heavily outnumbered the whites, and there was therefore, in every island, a real danger of an uprising of the blacks and a bitter colour war. None of these difficulties seem to have been realized by Dundas, who entered upon the enterprise with his customary levity.

The operations in the Windward Islands will be taken first. In the spring of 1793, after Tobago had been taken by the fleet and a small force from Barbadoes, an attempt was made against Martinique. It was hoped that the French Royalists in the island would give valuable assistance, but this did not materialize and the attack failed. It was clear that "showing the flag" was not sufficient, and that it would be necessary to send out an expeditionary force from England. A force, consist-

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ing of some seven thousand men under General Grey, escorted by a squadron under Admiral Jervis, afterwards Earl St. Vincent, was accordingly despatched at the end of the year, and arrived at Barbadoes in January, 1794. Its orders were to take Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia, and then proceed to Haiti, to which place an expedition had already been sent from Jamaica.

The first part of the programme was carried out with surprising ease. Grey and Jervis worked admirably together, and conducted their operations with great skill. Their task was facilitated by the faulty dispositions for defence adopted by the French, who, instead of concentrating on the protection of the harbours, sprinkled men and guns all round the coast, and adopted that ridiculous system of "cordon" defence which was so popular with the revolutionary generals, and which, as Napoleon said, was useless except against smugglers.

By the end of April Martinique, St. Lucia and Guadeloupe had all been captured; but to hold them proved a different matter. Grey received a vote of thanks from Parliament, but nothing more substantial, and while his little force, without reinforcements or stores, was rapidly wasting away in the fever-stricken climate, the French delivered their counterstroke.

In June Grey, at St Kitts, suddenly received news that a French force had eluded the vigilance of the fleet and arrived at Guadeloupe, where they had already gained a footing on shore. Hastily collecting what troops they could, Grey and Jervis sailed to the rescue, and there followed a bitter and protracted struggle for the mastery of the island. The enemy were commanded by a vigorous mulatto revolutionary named Hugues, who proved to be a ruthless and clever foe. Finally in December the British, still without reinforcements and reduced

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by sickness and casualties to a mere handful, were forced to evacuate the island. Staunch and loyal comrades to the end, Grey and Jervis, worn out, returned to England. The year which had begun with so much promise was ending in disaster, but it was no fault of theirs that Guadeloupe had been lost. They had been beaten, not by their enemies, but by the climate and Dundas's neglect. The most skilful general cannot fight without an army, and Grey no longer had one. Of the seven thousand men he had brought out at the beginning of the year, over five thousand had perished ; and the losses of the sailors were almost as heavy. Such was the price paid for an expedition lightheartedly launched by a politician without any appreciation of its true difficulties, and which, once launched, had received no support of any kind from home.

The situation grew steadily worse. Now firmly based on Guadeloupe, Hugues not only renewed privateering activities, but also sent agents to stir up rebellion in all the British islands. Grey's successor, Vaughan, did what he could, but the odds against him were very heavy. Although the long-awaited reinforcements did arrive in March, 1795, they proved to be only about half what had been promised, and consisted mainly of raw boys, quite unfitted for hard fighting in that deadly climate. The French efforts at stirring up the negroes proved successful. Several of the British islands flamed into revolt, and under cover of this Hugues succeeded in retaking St. Lucia ; but an attack on Martinique, which had been made the British headquarters in the windward sphere, was repulsed.

Meanwhile, in England, the Government was at last aroused by the serious nature of the situation, and a stronger expedition, consisting of some sixteen thousand

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men under Sir Ralph Abercromby, escorted by a fleet under Admiral Christian, was sent out. The convoy was twice driven back by storms with heavy loss, and did not reach Barbadoes until April, 1796. Abercromby's first care was to restore the situation in Grenada and St. Vincent, where the blacks were still in open revolt, and he then attacked and recaptured St. Luciá, where Brigadier-General John Moore was left as Governor. Detachments were then sent to occupy the Dutch colonies, since Holland had by this time thrown in her lot with France. By the time all this had been done, fever had again claimed so many victims that Abercromby judged that an attack on Guadeloupe, which would clearly be a big operation, would be beyond his powers until reinforcements arrived. These came by the end of the year, but by then Spain also had joined France, and the temptation to add her colonies to the bag was too strong for the Government, who ordered Abercromby to transfer his attention to them. Abercromby accordingly attacked and captured Trinidad in 1797, but failed to take Porto Rico, and no further operations were undertaken. Guadeloupe was thus left in the hands of the French to be a thorn in the flesh until its final capture in 1810.

A word must now be said about the operations in the leeward sphere. In September, 1793, a force had, as has been said, been sent to Jamaica to capture Haiti, which, lying as it did to windward, was a standing menace to Jamaica, and which also possessed the key of the important Windward Passage in St. Nicholas Mole, known as the Gibraltar of the West Indies. There is no need to tell the story of this expedition in detail. The campaign dragged on, with varying fortunes, and at an appalling cost of life and money, for five years, when a treaty was eventually concluded with the local

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negro leader, Toussaint l'Ouverture, and the island evacuated.

The conclusion of hostilities in the West Indies thus saw England in possession of Martinique, St. Lucia, Tobago, and Trinidad, and with Haiti in friendly hands; but Guadeloupe still remained to the enemy. The price paid had been out of all proportion to the result. The total losses in these West Indian campaigns are estimated by Fortescue at "little fewer than 100,000 men, about one half of them dead, the remainder permanently unfitted for service; the losses in dead exceeding the total losses of Wellington's Army from death, desertion, discharges, and all causes, from the beginning to the end of the Peninsular War."

Such was the result of the Government's failure to appreciate at the outset the magnitude of the task it had undertaken, and of "the folly," in the words of Mahan, "of sending a boy to do a man's work." Had a sufficient force been despatched in the first instance, instead of sending out troops in driblets and always just too late, much of this loss might have been avoided. Still more might the appalling casualty list have been reduced had the lessons of previous campaigns in the West Indies been learnt. "It is not the climate alone," wrote Moore in 1796, "that kills troops in this country; it is bad management. We seem as ignorant as if we had never before made war in it." The raising of black regiments, for instance, might have been sanctioned much earlier, and many valuable British lives thus saved. As it was, the Government listened to the fears of the local planters instead of to the recommendations of their generals on the spot, and refused to allow their formation for nearly three years. When these West India battalions were eventually raised they proved most useful.

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By 1799 twelve had been formed, and from that date onwards the defence of the West Indies was entrusted to them, assisted by only one British regiment, the 60th.

In the Mediterranean, when the French Revolution drew her into its vortex, England was nearly as badly placed for operations as she had been a century before. She had Gibraltar, it is true, but no fleet anchorage since the loss of Minorca, and the want of one was felt just as keenly as it had been in the War of the Spanish Succession.

As has been seen, Pitt's primary care when war broke out was for the West Indies, and it was not until August, 1793, that a fleet, under Admiral Hood, was sent to the Mediterranean.

Hood's first act was to get into touch with the French Royalists, who were still in open revolt in the South of France, and after some negotiation he succeeded in obtaining the surrender of Toulon, to be held in trust for Louis XVII. This fine harbour was an ideal base as far as purely naval facilities were concerned, but it possessed an extensive land front, and to hold this against the Republican armies required more troops than the British Government was either able or willing to send. Hood's original handful of marines did not receive any British reinforcement until October, when some two thousand men arrived from Gibraltar under General O'Hara, although a motley collection of some fifteen thousand allied troops, Spanish, Neapolitan, and Sicilian, had been assembled to help in the defence. These, however, with the exception of the Sicilians, proved to be quite unreliable ("dastardly trash" Hood called them) and the main burden of the defence fell upon the British. Under such conditions it was clear that the place could

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not be held for long against a superior enemy determined to recover it; and when, in December, under the direction of their young artillery commander, Colonel Bonaparte, whose quick eye at once saw the key of the position, the French captured the two forts which dominated the harbour, Mulgrave and l'Eguillette, Hood had no choice but to evacuate. The last to leave, after spiking the guns, was Major Kohler, the gunner whom we last noticed at the Great Siege of Gibraltar.

Contrary to the advice of General David Dundas, the successor of O'Hara, who had been wounded and captured, Hood deferred the destruction of the French fleet in the harbour, and the docks and arsenal, until it was too late to complete it. The enemy thus found many of the dockyard facilities intact, as well as the nucleus of a navy. Hood's refusal to listen to his military adviser on this occasion had far-reaching results; in fact, Callwell, in his *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance,* says that "no act of omission or commission on the part of any British naval or military chief during this great contest perhaps exerted so sinister an influence over the fortunes of the country" as Hood's failure to destroy Toulon, and that it is probable that, had he destroyed it properly, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt would never have taken place.

Thus deprived of Toulon, Hood, continuing his search for a base, and unable to seize Minorca because Spain was neutral, turned his attention to Corsica, where Paoli was only waiting for an opportunity to throw off the French yoke.

The operations against Corsica offer yet another example, in a century which was full of them, of how combined operations should not be carried out. From beginning to end they were one long quarrel between

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the two Services. No doubt there were faults on both sides, but it would certainly appear that it was Hood's overbearing manner, and his complete and unconcealed contempt for the soldiers, which were the main obstacles to co-operation. The French held three fortresses on the island, San Fiorenzo (St. Florent), Bastia, and Calvi. Hood first tried to reduce the defences by naval action alone, an attempt which failed, as such duels between ships and shore guns have nearly always failed throughout history, without, alas, the lesson ever being learnt. His next move was to send, without any reference to Dundas, two of the latter's best officers, Lieut.-Colonel John Moore and Major Kohler, to visit Paoli and spy out the land. After receiving Moore's report, which later proved to be somewhat optimistic, combined operations were begun in February, 1794. San Fiorenzo was successfully captured, but then the trouble began. Hood wanted the soldiers to push straight on to Bastia, while Dundas was of opinion that this was not practicable, involving as it did an advance of nine miles over the mountains with a force sadly deficient of artillery, transports, and stores of all kinds, most of these having been lost at Toulon. In addition, the French garrison was stronger than had been thought, while the military co-operation of the Corsicans had proved very disappointing. Dundas, therefore, proposed that Bastia should be invested by land and sea and starved out, pending the arrival of reinforcements from England. Hood, however, would brook no delay, and after trying to get Moore to disagree with his chief, demanded his marines back and announced that he would take Bastia single-handed. Dundas, who had for some time been in bad health, left, disgusted, for home, and Hood, leaving the army where it was, sailed away to the east coast. His attack proved

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a complete fiasco, and Bastia eventually surrendered from starvation, as Dundas had anticipated. That Moore, whom none can accuse of over-caution, agreed with Dundas is shown by the entry in his diary for May 31 : "Upon the whole, I am convinced that Bastia with our force could only have been taken by famine. The land attack made by Lord Hood, though he will gain credit for it at home, was absurd to a degree. Three times his number could not have penetrated from that quarter. He never advanced one inch. If he had he must have been cut up. The distance of his post, together with the unaccountable want of enterprise in the enemy, saved his troops from destruction." Hood, however, was nothing abashed, and was preparing to launch an attack single-handed against the third fortress, Calvi, when fortunately Dundas' successor, General Stuart, appeared on the scene. Stuart at once set himself to restore co-operation, and succeeded in doing so to some extent. A combined operation was begun against Calvi in June, and, the army having been reinforced, the place eventually surrendered in August. In this attack Moore greatly distinguished himself, and was wounded ; Nelson, then a captain in charge of a party of sailors working on shore, lost his right eye, and Lord Byron's father, a lieutenant in the 18th Foot, was killed. It is interesting to note, as a sidelight on the bad feeling which existed between the Services, that Nelson seems to have disliked Moore as much as Moore disliked Hood : "I wish Moore were a hundred leagues away," he writes from before Calvi.

After operations lasting some six months, Corsica was thus in British hands, and its crown was offered to and accepted by King George. It soon became clear, however, that the island would require as large a garrison

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as Toulon. The Corsicans were not long in discovering that British rule was just as irksome to them as French; while Bonaparte, who was fast rising to power, was not likely to sit idle with his native country in enemy hands, and did all he could to foster the anti-British agitation. In spite of the strong representations of the Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot, the Government would not maintain the garrison at the strength required to hold such a large island against both external attack and internal revolt; while Elliot made the further mistake of offending Paoli. By July, 1796, the attitude of the inhabitants, emboldened by Bonaparte's successes in Italy, became so threatening that Elliot ordered Nelson to seize Elba, so that an alternative base, inferior to Corsica but smaller and easier to defend, would be available in case Corsica had to be abandoned. Spain had, in addition, now joined France, and the British Government, who were by this time thoroughly shaken by Bonaparte's brilliant conquest of Italy, eventually, after much vacillation, took the drastic step of ordering the complete evacuation of the Mediterranean. The withdrawal was carried out by Admiral Jervis, afterwards Lord St. Vincent, who had succeeded Hood: Corsica was abandoned in October, 1796; Elba, owing to an omission to send the garrison official orders, not until the next year.

Bonaparte's quick eye at once saw his chance, for already grandiose schemes for the conquest of the East were taking shape in his mind. No sooner had the British left than we find him writing to the Directory, urging them to seize suitable bases on the way to Egypt, and then Egypt itself. "Truly to destroy England," he wrote, "we must take possession of Egypt;" and again, "With San Pietro (Sardinia), Corfu and Malta we shall be masters of the whole Mediterranean." Corfu and

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the Ionian Islands were duly stripped from Venice at the Treaty of Campo Formio, and with Corsica, all the Spanish possessions, and North Italy in her power, it looked as if the Mediterranean would soon become a French lake.

Fortunately, the British evacuation was of short duration, for, in 1797, Jervis won his famous victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, thus easing the naval situation; and by the spring of 1798 the Government had received such disquieting news of French activities at Toulon that it was decided to send the fleet back. Nelson was accordingly despatched with a small squadron, but arrived off Toulon to find his bird had flown. Bonaparte, with the "Grand Army of the Orient," had sailed on May 19, and on June 10 reached Malta. We have seen that he fully realized its importance: "That little island," he had written a year before, "is priceless to us." He accordingly demanded its surrender, and when this was refused, landed his troops at seven places and occupied Valetta, the Knights of St. John, who were mainly Francophile, offering but a nominal resistance.

All the points which Bonaparte had mentioned to the Directory as the keys of the Mediterranean were now in the hands of the French, but they were soon to learn again that bases without a fleet to assure their ultimate security are as useless as a fleet without bases to assure its mobility.

After abolishing the order of the Knights, removing their arms and treasure, and installing Vaubois with a garrison of four thousand men, Bonaparte sailed on, and after a voyage of forty-three days, reached Alexandria in safety, on July 1, with his hopes at their highest. One month later all his dreams of Eastern Empire were

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brought crashing to the ground by Nelson's destruction of his fleet at the Battle of the Nile.

Not only did this victory maroon the French army in Egypt, but it upset like a castle of cards the apparent supremacy which France had built up in the Mediterranean. Without a fleet to sustain them, her bases fell away from her one by one. The Maltese rose against Vaubois and drove him into Valetta. There he remained, blockaded by land by the Maltese, to whom the British supplied arms, and by sea by the British Fleet, until his ultimate surrender, in September, 1800, after a two years' siege. So effective was the blockade that during these two years only five French ships succeeded in entering the port.

In October, 1798, Corfu and the other Ionian Islands were taken from France by a combined Russo-Turkish fleet, while in November Minorca once more fell into English hands, being captured on this occasion by an expedition quietly launched by St. Vincent and General Stuart from Gibraltar. By a happy combination of dash and bluff, Stuart, ably aided by Commodore Duckworth, wrested the island from a superior force of Spaniards without a single casualty. The episode "being bloodless," says Fortescue, "has been absolutely forgotten, yet it forms one of the most striking examples in our history of the powers of impudence in war."

Preparations to retake the island were begun by Spain at Majorca and Cartagena, but never materialized. St. Vincent wished to attack the latter port, but Stuart, realizing that this was beyond his powers, wisely declined.

Meanwhile the French army, advancing southwards, had overrun Naples, the King withdrawing under Nelson's protection to Sicily. In February, 1799, Nelson

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appealed to Stuart for help to hold the island, and Stuart, who fully realized its value as a base, not only for the fleet, but also for offensive military operations against the French in Italy or Egypt (for it must be remembered that Malta was not yet in British hands), responded at once. Proceeding there himself with two battalions, with the aid of guerilla bands of peasants he soon organized a strong defence. A British garrison remained in Sicily for the rest of the war.

During this time Bonaparte had advanced into Syria, but found his plans again foiled by British sea power, in the shape of Sidney Smith's defence of Acre. Forced to return to Egypt, he managed to restore his prestige by a sensational victory at Aboukir over an invading force of Turks, and then decided to abandon his unfortunate army and return to France, where he knew the time was ripe for a change of Government. Successfully running the gauntlet of the Mediterranean, he landed in France in October, 1799, and by Christmas had become First Consul.

In the meantime, operations of interest had been carried out in other theatres. In 1795 the Revolutionary party in Holland had gained the upper hand, and had thrown in their lot with the French. This, of course, led them into hostilities with England, and in 1797 the Dutch fleet was defeated by Admiral Duncan at Camperdown. The victory was decisive, but nevertheless a number of the Dutch ships succeeded in escaping into the Zuyder Zee, where they found a safe refuge behind the guns of the coast defences.

In 1799, however, it was decided to send an expeditionary force to Holland to co-operate with the Russians in expelling the French. It cannot be said that the

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Government had any clean-cut military objective in sending it; in fact, Abercromby, who was in command until relieved later by the Duke of York, was practically told, as Fortescue remarks, "to land somewhere and do something." Yet, although the expedition is generally classed as a failure, it did achieve one useful result. For, as soon as Abercromby's troops had landed and, after some opposition, had secured the forts on the Helder, the Navy were at last able to enter the Zuyder Zee and finish off the remains of the fleet which had eluded them for two years. No fewer than twenty-five ships of war, mounting nearly 1,200 guns, surrendered to Admiral Mitchell without firing a shot, a prize twice as large as that which had fallen to Duncan at Camperdown. "The greatest stroke that has perhaps been struck in this war has been accomplished in a few hours and with trifling loss," wrote Moore, whose brigade had been the first to land.

The absorption of Holland by France had had, in addition, important results in the East, where the demands of the West Indian and European theatres of war had until then necessitated a strict economy of force. Pondicherry and the other French stations in India had, of course, been captured without difficulty directly war broke out, but as soon as this had been done, the East India squadron had been recalled and India left to its own resources. Until 1794 the protection of the Eastern trade was entrusted to such vessels as the East India Company could provide for itself, assisted only by one single warship; and the enemy privateers had in consequence a fine opportunity, of which they took full advantage. At first they operated from Mauritius and Bourbon, but when Holland joined France they gained in addition the use of the important Dutch bases, the

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Cape, Ceylon, and Java, which were even better placed for the purpose of harrying British commerce.

To save her trade, therefore, England was forced to undertake the reduction of the Dutch bases, but before resorting to force she made an attempt to acquire them peacefully. There was still in Holland a strong anti-revolutionary minority, whose leader, the Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, had fled to England. There he was persuaded by the Government to write letters to all the Dutch colonies overseas, urging them to regard the British as allies and admit them to their ports. At the same time, as the success of this expedient was doubtful, and as it was essential to forestall the French, orders were sent to the naval and military authorities in the East to occupy the Dutch possessions in those seas, and to employ force if the garrisons resisted. All such occupations, however, were to be carried out in the name of the Stadtholder.

Ceylon was especially mentioned, as it was of the greatest importance that the French should not acquire Trincomali. The Government of India, however, alive to the danger, had acted without waiting for instructions, as soon as the news that Holland had joined France had reached Calcutta in June, and the necessary expeditions were already prepared. The force for Ceylon was despatched from Madras, under the command of Colonel Stuart, and consisted of about four battalions, two of which were Indian, and some Madras Artillery. Escorted by the East India Squadron under Commodore Rainier, it reached Trincomali on August 1, 1795, and as the Dutch commander refused to surrender the fortress, the troops were put ashore. The landing was not opposed (very fortunately, as the force had to manhandle all their stores and ammunition over several miles of sandy

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beach), and on the 18th siege operations were opened. The Dutch resistance was slight; Fort Trincomali surrendered after a week, and Fort Oostenburg, the other work guarding the harbour, shortly after, the whole operation costing under a hundred casualties.

The fall of Trincomali practically ended the enemy's resistance. After its capture Stuart divided his force, and, moving southward down each side of the island, reduced the other forts along the coast, most of them surrendering without firing a shot. Stuart then reconcentrated his little army at Negombo, and prepared for the attack on Colombo, which, it was thought, being a strong fortress with a large garrison, would prove a harder nut to crack. After receiving reinforcements from India he began his advance early in February, 1796, but the anticipated resistance did not materialize. The Dutch garrison, although nearly three thousand strong, offered the feeblest defence, the only serious stand being made by a Frenchman at the head of some native troops; and on February 15, when the British Fleet sailed into the harbour, Colombo capitulated.

At the same time as Stuart had sailed for Ceylon, another expedition had been sent from India to Malacca, and this valuable port had been seized without difficulty in August, 1795.

Meanwhile, an attack had also been made on the Cape. The expedition destined for the Cape was despatched in two parts. The first under Captain Blankett and General Craig sailed in March, 1795; the second, under Captain Elphinstone (afterwards Lord Keith), and General Clarke, in May. Blankett and Craig were to proceed straight to the Cape, in order to forestall any attempt by the French to reinforce it. Once there it was left to their discretion whether to attack at once or await the second



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part of the expedition. The whole force was very weak and lamentably equipped. Craig had only one battalion, and Clarke three, and in spite of their remonstrances they were allowed no artillery and no money chest.

Craig arrived in False Bay on June 12. The Stadtholder's letter, urging the colonists to admit the British as allies, was at once sent ashore, but the Dutch returned a non-committal answer, agreeing to supply provisions but asking the British not to land. It soon became clear that they had no intention of surrendering, and that force would have to be applied; so word was sent to speed up Clarke, and also to St. Helena for reinforcements. After some further parleying, the Dutch Governor refused to supply any more provisions, evacuated Simon's Town, and threatened to burn it. Craig thereupon landed his one battalion, and some marines, and occupied the town, and a few days later the first shots were exchanged.

On August 7 Craig began an advance on Cape Town, the Navy in False Bay protecting his right flank. The enemy took up a position to oppose him in the defile of Muizenberg, but were shelled out by the fleet, and Craig made a valuable capture of five field guns. The enemy counter-attacked on the 8th but were repulsed. A welcome reinforcement of four hundred men and nine guns then arrived from St. Helena, and the next few days were spent in landing stores, no easy matter, as the force possessed not a single vehicle or animal, so that everything had to be manhandled. This lack of transport made any further advance on Cape Town out of the question, although the total distance to it from Simon's Town is only twelve miles; nor was it possible at that season of the year to transfer the force by sea to Cape Town. The situation thus remained a stalemate, Craig unable to advance, the Dutch afraid to attack, until the arrival of

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Clarke enabled operations to be resumed. Even then the force was completely without transport, and the troops were obliged to carry all their impedimenta, while volunteers from the crews of the transports hauled the guns. In addition the supplies sent proved to be insufficient, and but for the generosity of the Navy the troops would have starved.

On September 14 the enemy were again found in position astride the road at Wynberg. They were attacked and dislodged, but the overburdened troops were unable to follow up their success, and the force bivouacked for the night on the captured position. Fortunately the Dutch had had enough. On the morning of the 15th they asked for an armistice, and on the next day the Colony was surrendered. Thus, after nearly a century and a half of Dutch rule, the Cape passed for the first time into British hands.

The story of this operation, although half forgotten, provides a good example of the criminal negligence with which such expeditions were despatched at that time. The force was sent off, as has been said, without artillery or transport, with inadequate supplies, and without money to repair these deficiencies by local purchase. Official mismanagement was retrieved to a great extent by the gallantry and endurance of the troops, and by the splendid co-operation of the Navy; but there is no doubt that the ultimate success of the expedition must be attributed to a great extent to internal dissensions amongst the Dutch themselves. Many of them were in sympathy with the exiled Stadtholder, and as a result their defence had been half-hearted.

It had been originally intended that the bulk of the troops should, after capturing the Cape, go on to India, but the attitude of the Dutch remained so truculent that

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it was thought unwise to withdraw them. Accordingly the whole force remained under Craig as a garrison, with three ships, while the rest of the fleet sailed for India.

The situation remained fairly quiet, the Dutch maintaining an attitude of sullen hostility, until April, 1796, when warning was sent to Craig, as well as to Elphinstone at Madras, that the enemy were despatching a force to the East. Its destination was uncertain, but Elphinstone knew that it would have to pass the Cape wherever it was going, and accordingly sailed for Cape Town at once. He reached there at the end of May, and reinforcements arriving from England at the same time brought the garrison up to some six thousand. As nothing more was heard of the Dutch expedition, Craig and Elphinstone, chafing at idleness with so many troops, began to make preparations for an attack on Mauritius. Fortunately, before their plans were ready, the Dutch squadron was sighted. It turned out to be composed of nine warships, which anchored on August 6 at Saldanha Bay. Craig at once set off with a part of his force to oppose a landing, leaving the remainder to hold Cape Town. He arrived at Saldanha, a distance of ninety miles, after an arduous march of nine days, just in time to see Elphinstone sailing into the Bay. The Dutch Admiral bowed to *force majeure,* and surrendered, and the attack came to nothing.

By the time Napoleon had returned to France and become First Consul, all his work of 1796-7 had been undone, and he found full scope for his genius in repairing the blunders of the Directory.

The Austrians were again threatening the Riviera, and now was the moment for England to profit by the position she had won. Her fleet, strongly based on Minorca and

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Sicily, held undisputed command of the Mediterranean, and the line of communication of the French army opposing the Austrians, from Toulon to Genoa, lay bare to attack from the sea. Stuart strongly urged a blow at it, and had actually selected Moore to command the force, but the War Minister, Dundas, vetoed the plan. Stuart, who had done such fine work in restoring England's position in the Mediterranean, resigned, and died a year later.

The Government then changed their minds and authorized his successor, Sir Ralph Abercromby, to co-operate with the Austrians in the manner proposed by Stuart; but by the time Abercromby had arrived at Minorca, where the force was concentrated, Marengo had been fought and the opportunity had passed. "Our Ministers," wrote a contemporary soldier, "having for the moment exhausted the military strength of the Kingdom by the expedition to Holland, seemed to relapse into their old condition of not knowing what to do. Instead of anticipating events, they followed them, and followed them by movements so tardy that they became useless. Though masters of the Mediterranean Sea, they were blind to the importance of aiding the operations of Austria on the Northern shore."

For the rest of 1800, the British troops were frittered away in attempts against Ferrol and Cadiz, operations initiated by the Navy, entirely without reconnaissance and mainly in hopes of prize money, and rightly abandoned by the soldiers. In spite of her commanding naval position the only success achieved by England in this year was the reduction of Malta, which, as has been said, finally surrendered in September, 1800. It had been a year of lost opportunities; she had had a dominant fleet, suitable bases, and a small but adequate striking force, but the Government had not known how to use them.

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Marengo inclined England's allies to peace, and Bonaparte at once began, by skilful diplomacy, to sever them from her. Russia was bought with the promise of Malta, which the Czar had long claimed as titular Grand Master. Shortly after, Bonaparte succeeded in forming a League of the Northern Powers, hoping by this means to force England to recall the bulk of her fleet to home waters, and thus leave the road clear for the extrication of his army from Egypt. He tried to weaken her position in the Mediterranean still further by concluding with the "Two Sicilies" a treaty by which the British fleet was excluded from Naples and Sicily, but this move had little effect, as Malta was by then available instead.

Bonaparte's plans failed. Nelson's victory at Copenhagen and subsequent entry into the Baltic, together with the assassination of the Czar Paul, broke up the Northern League, while the vigilance of the Mediterranean squadron prevented the withdrawal or reinforcement of the "Army of the Orient." It was then decided, in combination with the Turks, to invade Egypt and destroy the isolated French force.

The expedition, the Navy under Keith, the Army under Abercromby, was assembled at Malta and then proceeded to Rhodes, where it was organized and drilled. At the same time a second force, under General Baird, was despatched from India to co-operate from the Red Sea. It is beyond the scope of this story to describe the expedition in detail. It will suffice to say that it had been prepared with the lack of care habitual to Dundas, Pitt's War Minister, and that it was only carried through by the pluck and determination of Abercromby and his men, and by the fine co-operation of the Navy. Considerable assistance was also provided, it must be said, by the incompetence of the French commander, Menou, who

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obligingly divided his forces, which were superior to the British, instead of concentrating them. Abercromby was killed, but his successor, Hutchinson, completed his task, and the remains of the ill-fated "Army of the Orient" finally capitulated in August, 1801.

The destruction of this army decided Bonaparte to come to terms. He had had the worst of the first round of his long duel with England, but he nevertheless succeeded in getting the best of the peace, by pushing through the preliminaries before the news of the capture of Egypt had reached England. By the Treaty of Amiens, in March, 1802, England agreed to restore all her conquests with the exception of Trinidad, Malacca, and Ceylon, while Egypt was to be handed over to the Turks. These conquests included, as we have seen, St. Lucia and Martinique, the Cape, and, in the Mediterranean, Minorca, Elba, and Malta. The peace, however, proved short-lived, for the ambitions of Bonaparte made the renewal of war inevitable. England duly evacuated Minorca and Elba, only to see the latter annexed by France before the end of the year. Over the withdrawal from Malta, therefore, she was more cautious, being determined that that island should not again fall into French hands. The Treaty of Amiens had stipulated that the Knights were to be restored, and the independence of the island, which was to be garrisoned temporarily by Neapolitan troops, guaranteed by all the Powers. There was, however, a hitch in obtaining the guarantees of Russia and Prussia, and England, holding to the letter of the Treaty, refused to evacuate until they were forthcoming, in spite of Bonaparte's protestations. The result was that the renewal of the war in May, 1803, found Malta still in her possession.

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1803—1815

The first blow was again struck in the West Indies. A large expedition had been sent out by Napoleon, at the end of 1801, to St. Domingo, but the resistance of the negroes and the incompetence and corruption of the French leaders had reduced it to impotence, so that it did not take long for a British fleet, under Admiral Duckworth, to bring about its complete collapse.

In the windward sphere, General Grinfield, who had been warned by the Home Government that a renewal of the war was imminent, had, in conjunction with Commodore Hood, made careful preparations. He was thus able, as soon as the news of the declaration of war was received, to seize St. Lucia and Tobago, and then the Dutch colonies. Martinique and Guadeloupe, however, were beyond his powers without reinforcement from England, and this was so long in coming that the initiative passed to the enemy.

Napoleon's plan this time was to strike at England, not indirectly through Egypt, but by direct invasion. There was nothing new in the plan itself, for the invasion of England had been attempted or threatened many times in previous wars ; Napoleon's originality lay in its method of execution. As soon as the war had been resumed, the English Navy had established a close blockade of the enemy ports, from Brest to Toulon. The temporary command of the Channel, even for a few hours, was essential to the success of Napoleon's scheme, and, in order to obtain it, it was obviously necessary for his scattered squadrons to break this blockade and concentrate. The novelty of Napoleon's plan lay in the choice of the rendezvous, which was to be, not in Europe as in previous attempts of this nature, but across the Atlantic

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at Martinique. The closest secrecy was maintained. All possible measures were taken to deceive the British into thinking that Sicily or Egypt was the objective, while the squadrons themselves were only to learn their destination from sealed orders to be opened at sea. The conception of the plan was truly Napoleonic in its audacity, but its execution demanded a greater combination of good luck and good management than could fairly be counted upon in an operation so dependent upon wind and weather as well as enemy action. How it was foiled by the vigilance and skilful dispositions of the Admiralty, and by the genius of Nelson, who, with no clue to guide him except that Villeneuve had passed Gibraltar, guessed his destination and pursued him across the Atlantic and back again, is a well-known story which need not be repeated here.

Trafalgar ended Napoleon's hopes not only of invading England, but also of crushing the British Navy. Thenceforward he directed his energies to destroying her trade, hoping by this means to bring her to her knees. Since, without a fleet, he could not blockade her imports, he tried, by his "Continental System," to blockade her exports. By the Berlin Decree of 1806 the nations of Europe were forbidden to admit British merchandise, being offered the choice between "war with France and cannon-balls for English vessels approaching their ports." This attempt "to make the land conquer the sea" was foredoomed to failure, and in his efforts to enforce his policy, Napoleon was led into a succession of wars which drained France dry, and brought about his ultimate downfall. How ludicrous the policy was is shown by the fact that the very army with which he was trying to conquer the Continent, in order to enforce the blockade, was clothed in English homespun and marched

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in English boots. Smugglers "got rich quick" in those days!

At the time, however, Englishmen, naturally enough, could not appreciate the decisive results of Trafalgar, nor that it had sounded the death-knell of Napoleon's dreams of world empire. The next few years, when he was marching from victory to victory, crushing Austria at Austerlitz, Prussia at Jena, and Russia at Friedland, were for England a time of the greatest anxiety, and Pitt succumbed under the strain. Nevertheless, under his successors the fight went on. To the Berlin and Milan Decrees England replied with her Orders in Council, by which she, in her turn, established a blockade of increasing stringency against all those nations who obeyed Napoleon. The enforcement of this blockade imposed a severe strain on her fleets, and rendered it more than ever necessary to keep a close watch on France to prevent her from re-establishing her naval strength. This was the cause of the initiation of several expeditions. In 1805 Craig was again sent to Sicily. "It being of the utmost importance," ran his instructions, "that Sicily should not fall into the hands of the French, the protection of that island is to be considered the principal object of the expedition." There was a very interesting case of the Army's assistance in the maintenance of sea power during the occupation of this island. Finding that local shipping was still being harassed from Neapolitan and Italian bases, "we began to form," writes Craig's Quartermaster-General, "a little flotilla for the better defence of the narrow seas. The mariners of Sicily and the Lipari Islands (the latter the better hands) flocked in as volunteers for the service, but when they found General Stuart proposing that his boats should carry the Neapolitan flag, the men declined.

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'Up with your own flag,' they cried, 'Viva il Rè Giorgio! ma pél Re Ferdinando, no, no.' Stuart found it necessary to give way; the British Jack was hoisted, and our boats were manned in two days. I had the direction of this appendage to our Army, which was much increased in 1809. Two or three artillerymen were put into every gunboat, and four or five soldiers in each of the long, fast, rowing-boats called 'scampavias.' This flotilla afterwards did good service; and even in its very early days, I had the pleasure of seeing some of the boats manned by these Sicilians and Lipariotes, who are lightly called cowards, lay vessels, of superior bulk and carrying French soldiers, on board, and capture them, and bring them away, in the sight of both armies. 'Viva il Rè Giorgio' worked wonders."

The enforcement of the blockade was also the cause of the expedition to Copenhagen in 1807. As a result of the Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia there appeared to be a danger that the Danish fleet would fall into Napoleon's hands. Canning had information to this effect from the mysterious "man on the raft," and also, there is little doubt, from Talleyrand, and, with commendable promptitude, decided to forestall the French by seizing it himself. An ultimatum was accordingly sent to Denmark demanding its surrender on pain of invasion. This, however, was followed, a few days later, by a similar ultimatum from Napoleon, and the unfortunate Danes, deciding that he was the more to be feared, refused England's demands. The British Government had, therefore, no option but to attack Copenhagen and secure the fleet by force. A similar operation had been carried out, seven years earlier, by Nelson, using naval action alone, but since then the Danes had considerably strengthened their defences, and it was therefore wisely

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decided to send on this occasion a military force in addition.

The expedition was well prepared, Castlereagh having by this time replaced the incompetent Dundas, and complete secrecy was maintained as to its destination. By August 12 a squadron, under Admiral Gambier, convoying a force of twenty-five thousand men under Lord Cathcart, dropped anchor between Elsinore and Copenhagen, and, four days later, the Danes still proving stubborn, the troops were put ashore, and Copenhagen invested. An attempt at relief was beaten off by Sir Arthur Wellesley's division, and on September 2, the enemy still refusing to surrender, Cathcart reluctantly began a bombardment of the town. A few days of this, however, proved enough, and on the 7th, to avoid the horrors of a storm, the Danes capitulated, and their fleet was secured. Heligoland was also seized as an outpost against any further Napoleonic schemes in Denmark. In his account of this Copenhagen expedition, again, Professor Callender makes no mention whatever of Cathcart and his twenty-five thousand troops. "To a chorus of exclamation from the astonished world," he writes, "Gambier returned to England with seventy Danish ships." The world might well have exclaimed had this result been achieved by the fleet alone.

Two years later another operation, nearer home, had to be undertaken, with the same object of preventing the enemy from re-establishing his naval power. This time Holland was the danger, and Antwerp, which Napoleon was making into a formidable naval base, a veritable "pistol pointed at the head of England," the objective.

"The efforts which the French have been making to create a marine force behind the Islands of the Scheldt," wrote a contemporary writer, "are truly extraordinary;

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the forests are at hand, and the banks of the river are almost covered with docks. If this work had continued much longer, we should have found a fleet at sea, without knowing whence it came; and this fleet, moreover, would have been a Dutch fleet, which I take to be a totally different thing to a French fleet. It was clearly the intention of Bonaparte to have secretly created a fleet whilst he was fighting his battles on the Continent; and after he had finished the work of conquest there, to have made some attempt on us by way of Holland."

An expedition was accordingly prepared, an army of forty thousand men under the Earl of Chatham and a fleet under Sir Richard Strachan. Their orders were "the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building at Antwerp or Flushing or afloat on the Scheldt; the destruction of the arsenal and dockyards at Antwerp and Flushing; the reduction of the island of Walcheren, and the rendering, if possible, of the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war." The plan was to make three separate landings. One force was to land on Walcheren Island and lay siege to Flushing, a second on Cadsand Island, in order to destroy the batteries at Breskens and thus enable the fleet to pass up the western channel, and a third on Schouwen and North Beveland to secure the mouth of the eastern channel. The remainder of the troops were to remain on their transports until they could be sent straight up to Antwerp. This plan was, however, upset by the weather, as heavy gales prevented the landing at Cadsand and Schouwen. On July 30, however, a landing was successfully effected on Walcheren Island with but slight opposition, and while one force invested Flushing, another moved west, and, aided by the fleet, had by August 2 secured South Beveland, the enemy falling back to the line Bergen-op-

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Zoom-Antwerp. Flushing surrendered after a fortnight's siege (which has a special interest for the artillery, as it was the first occasion on which the time-honoured privilege enjoyed by them of claiming "the bells of a captured city or an equivalent" was disallowed by the Government, after an appeal by the inhabitants, as a relic of a more barbarous age), and the force then concentrated at Bathz for the advance on Antwerp. The delay, however, caused by the resistance of Flushing, had enabled the enemy to collect an army of twenty-five thousand men under General Bernadotte, and to strengthen the defence of Antwerp by opening the dykes and flooding the surrounding country. Chatham and Strachan could not agree on a plan of action, and finally, on August 27th, called a council of war, at which it was decided that "the siege of Antwerp was impracticable, and that no possible advantage would result from undertaking any minor operations."

> "The Earl of Chatham, with his sabre drawn,
> Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;
> Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
> Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham,"

ran the contemporary doggerel, and it seems to paint a not unfair picture of the situation.

The force therefore fell back to Walcheren, but there sickness set in with such alarming rapidity that by the end of October only 4,500 men remained fit for duty. There was no alternative but evacuation; and this, after destroying the defences of the island, was accordingly ordered, and completed by December 23.

Thus ended in disaster and terrible loss of life the Walcheren Expedition of 1809. There is little doubt that the idea of the operation was sound; Napoleon himself

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admitted this, and it probably gave him, says Fortescue, "some of the most anxious and unpleasant moments of his life." The threat upon Antwerp threw Paris into a panic, and early in 1810 steps were taken to improve its defences. But, as in Gallipoli a century later, the success of the expedition was jeopardized, before ever a shot was fired, by faulty intelligence and a complete disregard for secrecy; and the failure thus prepared was completed by the adverse weather conditions, the inadequate co-operation and poor leadership of the two commanders, and, finally, by the fever which carried off a third of the force.

There is a very entertaining series of letters on this expedition written by one of the participators, which naïvely shows the feelings of one Service towards the other in those days. "Upon reaching our vessels," he writes, "there was still a greater bustle than in making our way to them. . . . In these circumstances, the deck was a scene of confusion—of noise—swearing—the cranking of ropes—the falling of blocks, and the mutual abuse of men. The sailors, in order to effect by cunning what they could not do by direct force, contrived, as if unintentionally, to let the yard-arms and ropes swing so as to knock down our men by dozens. Nothing is so unmanageable as a sailor, except by his own officer. They seem to regard us landsmen with contempt, and amongst the abuse which is dealt out from the mast-head by these porpoises, we are frequently saluted by the term of 'Hallo, tailors below there,' and what is still worse, this is generally but the prelude to a block or rope dropped *accidentally* on our heads. . . . Indeed, you can scarcely conceive, without having witnessed it, the hard, stubborn, jealous, mischievous nature of these sons of the ocean; they seem to have

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no satisfaction equal to that of playing us tricks, and certainly entertain a contempt for us, as if we were really tailors. . . . I walked the deck the greater part of the night . . . and could not but admire the silence of the officer who had the watch. I could not get a word from him ; and he once or twice said to me with a sly leer : ' Be silent, that I may hear the ship ; this part of the sea is full of rocks ; and if we were to go on during the night, and in such a fresh sea, we should all be lost.' This kind of hoaxing may serve you as a specimen of the sea-jests practised upon us. A military man should be sworn to the patient endurance of hardships, like the ancient knights ; and it is not the least of these necessary hardships to have to serve with seamen. I should as soon expect a musket to swim, as expect a good understanding between seamen and soldiers."

It must be added that these generous feelings were more than reciprocated by the sailors. Laughton, in his *Studies in Naval History,* says that the "mutual feeling of jealousy and contempt, strong enough on the part of the soldiers, was even stronger amongst the sailors, who saw favoured and courtly rivals seasick and helpless on board ship, but had no opportunity of seeing them in their own field of distinction. The pipe clay, the powdered head, the stiff clothing and etiquette of soldiers were all repulsive to the ' tar ' of olden time." It is comforting to think that the century which has passed since the Napoleonic wars has seen the complete disappearance of these mutual dislikes.

Meanwhile, overseas, the enemy, again in possession of the bases which had been restored to them at the Peace of Amiens, had resumed their policy of commerce destruction, a form of naval warfare for which the French

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appear to have a special talent, and which, from long practice in previous wars, they had brought to a high pitch of perfection. Supreme as the British Navy was after Trafalgar, it found itself nevertheless unable to afford adequate protection to seaborne trade so long as the privateers which were preying on that trade had secure ports of refuge from which to operate; and the Government was therefore again forced to send military expeditions to capture these bases.

The Cape was the first to be attacked. This expedition, sent out by Pitt and Castlereagh in the autumn of 1805, the year of Austerlitz and Trafalgar, attracted little notice. The force had originally been collected to reinforce the West Indies against the supposed attack by Admiral Villeneuve, but when Villeneuve returned to Europe to meet his fate at Trafalgar, the Government decided to use the troops to retake the Cape. The naval squadron was commanded by Commodore Home Popham, and the troops, some six thousand strong, by General David Baird. The units employed were one regiment of cavalry, three companies of artillery, and seven battalions.

After calling at Madeira, and Bahia in Brazil, the expedition arrived off Table Bay on January 4, 1806. Sending Beresford with a detachment to Saldanha Bay, Baird landed the remainder of the force, covered by the guns of the fleet, on Blueberg beach, eighteen miles north of Cape Town, on January 6 and 7. The landing was practically unopposed, but a heavy surf caused some casualties. On the 8th the advance on Cape Town was begun. The Dutch Commander, Janssens, had collected his available force, a motley army of Dutch and French regulars, Boers, German mercenaries, and natives, totalling about two thousand men, to bar the road; but



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Baird had little difficulty in overcoming their resistance.

Cape Town was surrendered on the 10th, and the whole Colony a week later. The Dutch and French troops were returned to Europe, and the Germans transferred to the British service. Baird's total losses in this brief campaign were under two hundred and fifty, and these were shortly after made good by the recovery of several hundred British infantry who had been captured in the Channel by a French frigate bound for Mauritius, which put into Table Bay before realizing that it had changed hands.

A comparison between the operations of 1795 and those of 1806 is interesting. In 1795 it had taken three months to reduce the Cape, in 1806 only a fortnight; in 1795 the landing had been effected at Simon's Town, in 1806 just north of Cape Town. But the main difference was that by 1806 England had learnt in the hard school of war and knew what she wanted. She was fighting for her life against Napoleon, and was determined to deprive him of all possible footholds overseas from which her principal weapon, her sea power, might be damaged. Hence, while Dundas's first expedition had been carelessly planned and badly organized, the second under Castlereagh was clear-cut and decisive.

It was then decided to capture Mauritius, which had never as yet been attacked. In all the wars with France, this island had proved an ideal base for privateers, and its value had been fully appreciated by Napoleon, who had sent out, in 1803, a special Military Governor, General Decaen, to organize its defence. It became such a thorn in the flesh to English trade in the Indian Ocean that at last, in 1808, the Government of India decided that it must be taken, together with its neighbour,

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Bourbon or Réunion. As a preliminary step to the attack upon Mauritius, it was decided to seize Rodriguez as an advanced base. A small force, part British, part Indian, was accordingly despatched from Bombay early in 1809, under the command of Colonel Keating. The island was occupied without opposition, being at that time inhabited only by two French families, who had divided it between them, although apparently not on speaking terms. They might truly be the prototypes of the characters in Gilbert's poem :

"At first they didn't quarrel very openly, I've heard,
They nodded when they met, and now and then exchanged a word;
The word grew rare, and rarer still the nodding of the head,
And when they meet each other now, they cut each other dead.
To allocate the island they agreed by word of mouth,
And Peter takes the north again, and Somers takes the south;
And Peter has the oysters, which he hates, in layers thick,
And Somers has the turtle—turtle always makes him sick."

In September, Keating, a very energetic officer, tired of inaction, and finding a fellow-spirit in Commodore Rowley of the Royal Navy, made a successful raid on St. Paul's in Bourbon, spiking the guns and carrying off stores and supplies. The French Commander of the island took this reverse so much to heart that, in the true Samurai spirit, he committed suicide. Keating returned to Rodriguez, but, after receiving in the spring of 1810 a reinforcement of some 3,500 men from Madras, delivered a second attack in July, again ably assisted by Rowley. The French offered but slight resistance, and the island was captured at a cost of under a hundred casualties.

Preliminary operations were then begun against Mauritius. In August Captain Pym, of H.M.S. *Sirius*, succeeded in seizing the Isle de la Passe, which defended

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the southern entrance to Port Mahébourg. A few days later the fort at Point du Diable, commanding the northern entrance, was also captured by Captain Willoughby of the *Nereide*. This effectually bottled up the French vessels in the harbour, and it only remained to wait for the main force to arrive from India to capture the town. Elated, however, by their success, and urged on also, no doubt, by the hopes of prize-money, the impetuous sailors could not wait, and decided to attack the ships in the harbour. The attack failed disastrously. All the four British vessels employed in it grounded and were captured, and the French retook the Isle de la Passe. Thus not only were the fruits of the preliminary operations lost, but the local command of the sea passed to the enemy, who blockaded Bourbon and resumed their privateering activities. In one of their raids they succeeded in capturing the frigate conveying from India the commander of the expeditionary force, General Sir John Abercromby (a son of Sir Ralph), but he was fortunately rescued shortly after by the indefatigable Rowley.

In October the arrival of Admiral Bertie from the Cape, and Admiral Drury convoying the troops from Madras, restored the naval situation. By the middle of November the military contingents from Bombay and Madras had also arrived, bringing the total force assembled at Rodriguez to some ten thousand; and all was ready for the invasion of Mauritius.

Meanwhile some attempts had been made to shake the defences by propaganda. Leaflets were introduced into the island, urging the inhabitants to remain neutral, and promising them that, if they did, they would not only be unmolested, but would find the change of flag to their advantage. Propaganda, however, in those days was apparently not considered by the French a legitimate

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weapon of war—although Napoleon had inserted in the *Moniteur* an anti-English poem, entitled "Goddam"—as we read that Decaen protested that "this attempt to seduce the subjects of His Imperial Majesty from their duty and allegiance could only be regarded as a violation of the law of nations and of war." He added that the attempt was in any case hopeless, and that his only regret was that more leaflets had not been sent, as he could have found a use for them as cartridge paper.

The troops under Decaen numbered only about 1,300 regulars, including some five hundred Irish; and though there were also several thousand local militia, their military value was very low. It was not, therefore, the strength of the garrison which made the operation difficult, but the nature of the coast. It had been thought for many years that the landing of a large force in Mauritius was not possible on account of the coral reefs which surrounded the island, which made the anchoring of a fleet of transports, as well as the actual disembarkation, very hazardous. But during the previous two years Rowley had not been wasting his time. He had carried out most careful and thorough reconnaissances and soundings, and the results showed that the navigational difficulties had been greatly overestimated.

It was decided to land near Cape Malheureux and march direct on the capital, Port Louis. The force accordingly sailed from Rodriguez on November 22, and by the 29th was safely anchored, some seventy ships in all, in the narrow passage between Gunners Quoin and the Cape. Disembarkation was begun at once. The Navy had some shallow draught brigs which were brought in and anchored on the reef, within a hundred yards of the shore, to cover the landing, but there was no

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opposition. The troops were conveyed in ships' boats safely through gaps in the reef, and by the evening the whole force, with three days' supplies and ammunition, and some field guns, had been put ashore. The disembarkation was under the charge of Captain Beaver, R.N., the officer who had superintended the landing at Aboukir Bay in 1801. He conducted this one, although unopposed, with equal care and precision, somewhat to the impatience of the soldiers, who would have preferred less method and more speed.

The advance guard, led by the indefatigable Keating, pushed inland without delay, and the main body soon followed, the guns being dragged by sailors. The march was continued till late into the night, and resumed at dawn on the 30th after only a few hours' rest. Only a few French skirmishers were encountered, and in spite of the heat and the exhaustion of the men, good progress was made. On December 1 the enemy was found in position behind the River Seche (now called des Citrons) with their left on Pieter Both Hill. They numbered some 3,500, with a few guns. They were attacked at once, their line driven in, and Pieter Both captured, but the fall of night and the exhaustion of the British troops saved them from decisive defeat.

The 12th Foot (now the Suffolk Regiment) especially distinguished themselves in this engagement, and received the thanks of Abercromby.

It had been intended to renew the attack on the 2nd, but the French had had enough : a flag of truce arrived at dawn, and shortly afterwards Decaen capitulated. On December 3, 1810, Port Louis was occupied by the British. The total losses incurred in this short campaign were under three hundred. Curiously enough, a battle honour was awarded for Bourbon but not for Mauritius.

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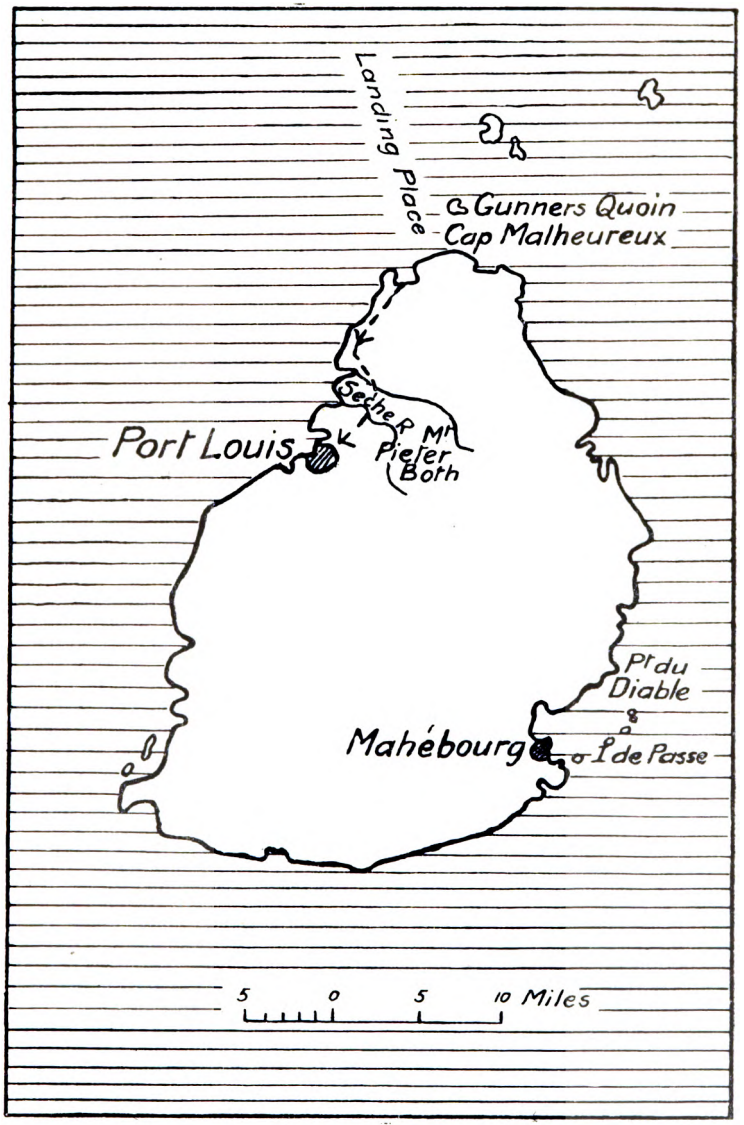


MAURITIUS.

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The spoils of war included two hundred guns mounted in the forts and thirty-six ships, while some two thousand British prisoners were released. The terms of the capitulation were very generous. The French regular garrison, most of them veterans of Bonaparte's Italian campaigns, were allowed to return to France, while the inhabitants were guaranteed their private property, and their laws, religion, and customs, and were further granted permission to leave the island at will during the two years following if the new régime proved distasteful.

Meanwhile, in the Caribbean also, expeditions had been directed against the enemy's remaining bases, for, apart from the shelter they afforded to privateers, Napoleon's attempt to use Martinique for a more ambitious purpose in 1804, as a rendezvous for his fleets, had brought home to the British Government the danger of leaving any of these islands in his hands. As soon, therefore, as his invasion of Spain, in 1808, had converted the Spaniards, whose influence in the Caribbean was still considerable, from enemies into allies, it was decided that the moment was ripe to liquidate the French menace in the West Indies for good and all.

The operations do not call for any special mention. In view of the preponderant naval superiority of England their ultimate success was assured. Martinique was first attacked, in January, 1809, by a force of some ten thousand men, drawn partly from the local West Indian garrison and partly from Bermuda and Halifax, and commanded by General Beckwith. The attack was well-planned and executed, and the island fell after three weeks, at a cost of only five hundred casualties. Unlike previous campaigns, and in spite of the fact that the operations were carried out in incessant rain, only a very small number of these were due to sickness. No sooner

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had Martinique fallen than a French squadron arrived, and, finding itself deprived of its main base, took refuge in the Saints Islands. There it was at once blockaded by Admiral Cochrane, while Beckwith sent General Maitland with a detachment to drive it out into the arms of the sailors. By seizing a position overlooking the anchorage, and landing two heavy howitzers, Maitland soon succeeded in doing this, thus providing a pretty little example in co-operation.

Beckwith then turned on Guadeloupe, which was captured, at a cost of three hundred casualties, by February, 1810. The Dutch islands of St. Martin and St. Eustatius were seized immediately after, and since in the leeward sphere St. Domingo had already been taken, in co-operation with the Spaniards, in 1809, the French were thus at last deprived of all their remaining bases in the Caribbean.

The next step was the capture of Java. This island also had received the special attention of Napoleon, and had become as troublesome a nest of privateers as Mauritius. Moreover, as the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company, its reduction seemed essential to the security of British interests in Malaya. The necessity for its capture was therefore strongly urged by Stamford Raffles, the ablest and most far-sighted official on the spot, and his representations fortunately found favour with the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, who was by no means averse to associating his name with such an important conquest.

A mixed expedition, part British and part Indian, the Indian troops being all volunteers from the Bengal Army, was accordingly despatched from India, under General Auchmuty, in April, 1811, and was accompanied by Lord Minto in person. After concentrating at Malacca,

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the force sailed to Cape Sambar in Borneo, where it remained while the final reconnaissances were being carried out, and then made straight for Batavia. It anchored off Chilingching, an island to the east of Batavia, on August 4, and the landing began. Lord Minto, it is recorded, although sixty years of age, leapt waist-deep into the sea and waded ashore, while Auchmuty had himself carried ashore by a sailor—thus illustrating the difference, as a somewhat cynical officer observer remarked at the time, between an old soldier and an old fool! Once landed, the troops found themselves, as usual, completely devoid of transport, all animals having, of course, been removed by the enemy. Fortunately there was no opposition, the defenders, under General Janssens (whom we last met at the Cape) having withdrawn inland, and the good behaviour of the British troops made such an impression on the natives that Auchmuty was able to raise a local corps of carriers. Janssens' plan was to lure the invaders into the fever-stricken area of Batavia and there leave them to the tender mercies of the climate. Auchmuty, however, was not to be caught so easily. Directly Batavia had been secured he pushed on, and on August 10 attacked and captured Weltevreeden, gaining in the process not only guns, stores, and transport, but also a healthy camp. Siege operations were then begun against the enemy's fortified position at Cornelis, which was eventually stormed, against a two to one superiority and at a cost of over six hundred casualties, on August 26, Rollo Gillespie being the hero of the day. After some further desultory resistance, Janssens surrendered unconditionally a few weeks later.

So ended a little expedition which, although now half forgotten, is one of the most creditable minor campaigns

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in the history of the British Army, and well deserves its battle honour. The leadership was excellent, and, says Fortescue, had the operations been conducted by Napoleon instead of Auchmuty, whole libraries would have been written in praise of them. The fall of Java removed the last enemy base, and put an end to the predatory warfare which had for so many years taken such a heavy toll of British trade in the Indian Ocean.

The remainder of the war contains no operations of special interest from the point of view of this book. In the Mediterranean the only permanent change in the situation was caused by the acquisition of the Ionian Islands. The southerly group was captured without difficulty in 1809-10 by a small force detached from Sicily, at the request of Admiral Collingwood, who wanted an anchorage at the entrance to the Adriatic. Paxo was captured in 1814, and Corfu, which was strongly garrisoned by the French and had therefore not been attacked, was surrendered after Napoleon's abdication.

In 1812, the high-handed policy which England had been forced to adopt towards neutral shipping brought her into conflict with the United States of America. Similar difficulties, it will be remembered, arose in the early stages of the Great War, and were then only overcome by the most tactful handling. The war which followed naturally increased England's anxieties. The danger lay not only in the direct military threat to Canada, but in the new potential naval menace. Although the navy of the United States was negligible, their entry into the war threw open to the French a number of fresh bases in the Western Atlantic, where, since the capture of the last of the French West Indian islands two years before, the enemy privateers had been deprived of any

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refuge. The reply of the Admiralty was to establish a rigorous blockade of the American seaboard, but this, together with the continuous watch and ward which still had to be kept in Europe, taxed their resources to the utmost. A number of seaborne land attacks were made against enemy towns, Washington, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Mobile, but they were inspired either by political reasons or by hopes of prize-money, and none of them can be said to have been undertaken with the primary object of improving the naval situation.

A recognition of the heavy responsibilities of the Admiralty and a correct appreciation of the part that might be played by the Army, even as late as 1813, in lightening them, is to be found in a letter sent by Lord Melville at the Admiralty to Wellington in July of that year. "The employment of a body of troops," he wrote, "to destroy the shipping in some of the enemy's ports in France or America would at once liberate a large portion of our naval forces and diminish greatly the public expenditure." The Peninsular War, however, was then in full swing, and few troops could be spared for other purposes.

Nevertheless, in December, 1813, an expedition was again sent, under General Graham, to Bergen-op-Zoom to deliver another attack, in co-operation with the Prussians, on Antwerp. The Prussians, however, did not do their part, and the operation ended in failure.

The peace treaties which concluded the Napoleonic Wars confirmed England in possession of all the most important of her conquests, thus consolidating her sea power on an even broader and firmer basis than before. In the Mediterranean she at last acquired, in Malta, which was assigned to her in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, that ideal base for which she had been

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seeking for over a century. Not only did it possess, in Valetta, as fine a harbour as Port Mahon, but its strategic situation, at the centre of the Mediterranean, was better than that of Minorca; and so with Malta in her hands there was no hardship in returning the latter island to Spain. In addition, the Ionian Islands remained under her control as a protectorate.

On the road to India her gains in the war were even more valuable. She retained the Cape, although a large sum of money (which also purchased what is now British Guiana) was paid to Holland in compensation: Mauritius, with its fine harbour of Port Louis: and Ceylon, the strategic centre of the Indian Ocean. The Seychelles and Rodriguez also remained British, although Bourbon was returned to France.

In the Caribbean she had acquired Trinidad; and, in addition, St. Lucia, that little island which, by virtue of its geographical position and its fine anchorage of Castries, she had been forced to capture so many times in past wars, at last came permanently into her keeping.

In the North Sea, Heligoland was retained, while in the south-eastern Atlantic the final imprisonment of Napoleon in St. Helena led to the annexation, for additional security against attempts at rescue, of Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

Only in Malaya did England sacrifice the position she had won, by returning Malacca and Java to the Dutch. How the situation there was restored a few years later, by the genius of one of the greatest of her empire builders, will be related in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: CONSOLIDATION

THE year 1815 found England already in possession of most of those keys of empire which she holds to-day. The eighteenth century had been for her a century of war, in which she had finally overcome her great rival, France, and in the process had established her sea power upon a firm and lasting basis, and laid the foundations of a world-wide empire. During the nineteenth century, after 1815, her position was never seriously challenged, and it was therefore, in the main, a century of peace and consolidation. There were, nevertheless, several important gaps in her sea communications which had still to be filled in, of which the first was at the eastern exit of the Indian Ocean.

The decision to restore Java and Malacca to the Dutch at the close of the Napoleonic wars seemed to sound the knell of British ascendancy in Malaya, and, in fact, many English traders prepared to leave. Fortunately, there was a man on the spot, far-sighted enough to see what was wanted, and daring enough to do it in the teeth of official opposition. This was Sir Stamford Raffles, who in return for his services in the capture of Java had been made its first Governor, and after its cession had been transferred to Sumatra. Raffles was not at this time in good favour with the East India Company, who had resigned themselves to the supremacy of the Dutch in Malaya, and were afraid that his ambitious



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schemes would lead them into fresh troubles and wars. They were thoroughly war-weary, and anxious for peace at any price. But Raffles thought otherwise. He was determined to challenge the Dutch monopoly, and saw that if England was to improve her position she must acquire some key point on this great trade route. His first step was to go to Calcutta and lay his plans before Lord Hastings, who had succeeded Lord Minto as Governor-General. From him he succeeded in obtaining permission to secure a new trading station in the Straits of Malacca, the Rhio Islands or Johore being mentioned as suitable sites, but the permission was qualified by the proviso that nothing should be done to antagonize the Dutch. Raffles knew well that this proviso really stultified the whole project, but hoped to overcome it by acting rapidly. He had already selected Singapore as his objective. It is interesting to note that this island had been offered as a gift by the then Sultan of Johore to a travelling Scot, Alexander Hamilton, as far back as 1703; but Hamilton had remarked, with true Scotch caution and foresight, "that it could be of no use to a private person, though a proper place for a company to settle a colony in, lying in the centre of trade, and being accommodated with good rivers and safe harbours, so conveniently situated that all winds served shipping, both to go out and come in." Raffles held the same opinion of its value, and was determined to secure it for his country. He had to submit, however, to a vexatious delay at Penang, whose Governor was jealous and obstructive, before he could raise the necessary forces; and the delay enabled the Dutch, whose suspicions had been aroused, to occupy the Rhio Islands. Eventually, in January, 1819, however, Raffles' small expedition dropped anchor at Singapore. Fresh difficulties then arose with the

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natives, there being two rival claimants to the island, but Raffles was not to be denied, and succeeded in pushing through a treaty, by which, in return for a subsidy, the British were given sole rights to establish a trading station. No sooner was the ink dry than the storm of opposition, which Raffles had anticipated, broke. The Dutch Governor of Malacca protested that Singapore had been seized by force, and threatened to retake it. Hastings sent orders that if the post had not already been obtained no further attempts to establish one were to be made: and India House wrote out in panic that if trouble with the Dutch ensued it would be entirely due to Raffles' "intemperance of conduct." Fortunately, however, the deed was done: the flag had already been hoisted, and the key of the western entrance to the Pacific was safe in British hands. "The great blow," wrote Raffles to a friend, "has been struck, and though I may personally suffer in the struggle, the nation will be benefited." He did suffer in the struggle, and died a disappointed man, ruined in health and pocket, at the early age of forty-five, but the city which he founded grew and prospered, and stands to-day, one of the most important naval bases in the world, as the finest monument to his wisdom and courage.

Raffles' preliminary treaty was subsequently superseded and enlarged by a second one in 1824, which not only confirmed England in possession of the whole of Singapore and the surrounding waters, but also put an end to the long-standing rivalry between English and Dutch by establishing those spheres of interest which still exist, the Dutch on the islands and the English on the mainland of Malaya. In accordance with this arrangement, England handed over Sumatra and received Malacca in exchange.

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The eastern key of the Indian Ocean having thus been secured, England's attention was next turned to the western one, Aden, which, it will be remembered, was, in Albuquerque's opinion, one of the four essential bases for command of the East. As far back as 1618 the East India Company had established a trading post at Mocha, but no attempt had been made in those early days to acquire Aden, which had declined considerably in importance as a result of the opening up of the Cape route. In 1799, as a consequence of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, a force had been sent to occupy Perim, but it was withdrawn as soon as the French Army of the Orient had been destroyed, and nothing further occurred during the Napoleonic wars. Shortly after, however, the growing power of Mehemet Ali of Egypt, who, supported by the French, had rebelled against Turkey, made himself master of Palestine and Syria, and was extending his influence into Arabia, led the East India Company to contemplate the permanent occupation of Aden.

An opportunity was soon provided. In 1837 a British vessel was shipwrecked there and its crew ill-treated by the Sultan. Captain Haines of the Indian Navy was accordingly sent to demand compensation, and succeeded in persuading the Sultan to sell the port. Difficulties, however, then arose, as the latter stipulated that the inhabitants should still remain under his rule. The company, of course, could not agree to this, and when the Sultan's son grew truculent and tried to arrest Haines, it was decided to employ force. A small combined expedition was therefore sent from Bombay in January, 1839, the troops consisting of a wing of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and an Indian battalion. Landing under cover of the ships' guns, the troops soon overcame the slight resistance put up by the Arabs and captured

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the peninsula; and two attempts to recover it later that year and in 1840 were easily repulsed.

In 1857 Perim, a necessary outpost for Aden, was again occupied, this time permanently, and shortly afterwards the complete security of the harbour was assured by the purchase of Little Aden, and, later, of a stretch of hinterland. In 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal restored to Aden the strategic importance of which the Cape route had for a time deprived it, and rendered it more essential than before that it should remain in British keeping.

Aden was the first of the many additions made to the empire in the reign of Queen Victoria. Its acquisition was followed a year later by that of Hong Kong, but in order to appreciate the circumstances which led up to the occupation of this important base, it is necessary to go back a few years and trace briefly the growth of British interests in China.

The story of the British in China is a story of the protection of trade, the beginning of which dates from the end of the seventeenth century. Trade with China was at first a monopoly of the East India Company, and was carried out exclusively with Canton. The Company were more concerned with their dividends than with their dignity, and their officials had to submit to all manner of restrictions and insults from the Chinese, who frankly despised the "barbarian" traders. The Company's monopoly, however, expired in 1834, and it then became necessary for the British Government to interest themselves in the matter, and to set up some form of authority to protect British merchants, and if possible to improve commercial relations with the Chinese. They accordingly sent out Lord Napier, with the title of "Chief Superintendent of British Trade." His instructions,



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given by Lord Palmerston, invested him with extra-territorial political and judicial powers, thus laying the foundation of those special privileges which have been the main cause of contention between China and the Western Powers ever since; but he was warned that he could not count upon naval or military backing except in extreme cases. He was, however, directed "to enquire for places where British ships might find requisite protection in the event of hostilities in the China Sea."

Lord Napier's mission proved to be a complete failure. Its difficulties had not been appreciated by Palmerston, and three months after his arrival Napier died, worn out with the obstructions and indignities he had received from the Viceroy of Canton, in whose eyes he was merely another contemptible barbarian merchant. Before his death, in a despatch dated August, 1834, he clearly stated it as his opinion that nothing short of force would secure a just commercial treaty, and recommended that a British force "should take possession of the island of Hong Kong, in the eastern entrance of the Canton River, which is admirably suited for every purpose." Palmerston, however, was unwilling to act, and matters drifted on from bad to worse under Captain Elliot, Napier's successor, the Cantonese becoming daily more insolent, and Elliot, with no force to support his arguments, daily more powerless. One of the chief causes of dispute was the importation of opium, which was opposed by the Chinese, not, it is to be noted, from any motives of morality, but purely because it was financially disadvantageous to them. At last, in 1839, the British community was actually driven out of Canton, and, after being refused shelter by the Portuguese at Macao, who were afraid of offending the Viceroy and losing their own privileges, were reduced to living on ships anchored off Hong

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Kong; while an Imperial Edict was published definitely excluding them from any further direct trade with China. This at last aroused public opinion in England, and the Government was forced to take action.

A combined expedition was accordingly despatched, with the object of obtaining reparation from Peking for the sins of Canton, and security for future trade. It consisted of seventeen warships and some four thousand troops, the whole under the command of Commodore Bremer, and dropped anchor in Hong Kong harbour in June, 1840. There appears to have been no intention on the part of the Government at the time the expedition was sent to demand the cession of Hong Kong, or any other part of Chinese territory, although the Indian Government suggested the occupation of Lantao Island, west of Hong Kong. Bremer at once established a close blockade of Canton, and then, sailing north, seized the island of Chusan as an advanced base for operations against Peking. Part of the expedition then proceeded to Tientsin, from where the British Government's Note was sent to the Emperor. The display of force proved to be sufficient for him, and Canton was ordered to come to terms. After six weeks of negotiations without any result, however, it became clear that Canton was still unrepentant, and would have to be given a direct lesson. An ultimatum was therefore sent to the Viceroy, and as this elicited no reply, the defences of the Canton River were attacked, and captured by assault, under cover of a naval bombardment. It was on this occasion that a mandarin, in command of one of the forts, with a consideration which would have warmed the hearts of any Hague Conference, sent a message to Captain Dundas, of H.M.S. *Melville*: "If you no put plum in, me no put plum in"

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—a remarkable instance of the amenities of war! Our ships, however, did "put plum in," and the result was immediate; Canton asked for an armistice, and by January, 1841, a treaty was signed, by which an indemnity was granted, trading rights restored, and the island and harbour of Hong Kong ceded to England "in perpetuity."

Chusan was accordingly abandoned, and possession of Hong Kong formally taken on January 26. On the very same day, however, the Emperor, regaining courage now that his capital was no longer threatened, repudiated the treaty, and ordered that "a large body of troops should be assembled, and an awful display of celestial vengeance made." Fighting broke out again in February, and reinforcements of Indian troops having arrived under Sir Hugh Gough, the force proceeded to fight its way methodically to Canton. By March 18 the city was dominated by the guns of the Navy, whereupon the Cantonese again pretended to submit, and trade was actually resumed. Two months later, however, a treacherous night attack was made with fireships on the British Fleet at anchor off Canton, and so once more the troops were set in motion, and after a brisk little campaign of ten days had again fought their way to the walls of the city. In torrential rain the final preparations for an assault were completed, while the warships in the river opened a bombardment of the town, paying special attention to the enemy general's headquarters. This time, however, the lesson had been enough. To save their city from storm the Cantonese surrendered, and the Treaty of Canton, signed in May, 1841, concluded the operations in the south.

Peking, however, still remained obdurate, and it was not until Sir Henry Pottinger, who had succeeded Elliot

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as Plenipotentiary, had led his forces north, captured the principal coastal towns from Amoy to Shanghai, and advancing up the Yangtse, was actually threatening Nanking, that the Emperor capitulated. By the Treaty of Nanking, signed in August, 1842, the five ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai were thrown open to British trade, and the cession in perpetuity of the island of Hong Kong, as a port where the British could "careen and refit their ships when required and keep stores for that purpose," was confirmed.

There followed a short period of peace, but in 1856 the seizure by the Cantonese of a merchantman flying the British flag caused a renewal of hostilities. As soon as troops could be spared from India after the Mutiny, a combined expedition was sent, and Canton was captured in 1858. Again, however, the Emperor refused to ratify the peace treaty, and this time it was necessary for a joint British and French force, under Sir Hope Grant, to storm the Taku forts, take Peking, and burn his summer palace before he would submit. Cousin-Montauban, in command of the French troops, was rewarded with the title of Comte de Palikao, having wisely declined that of Comte de Pékin! The island of Chusan was again seized and used as an advance base for these operations. By the Convention of Peking in 1860, more treaty ports were opened to trade, a permanent British representative was admitted to Peking, and the position at Hong Kong was strengthened by the cession of the peninsula of Kowloon, which forms the northern shore of the harbour. In 1898, for the purpose of still further assuring the safety of the harbour, an additional stretch of territory north of Kowloon was taken over on a ninety-nine year lease from the Chinese Government.

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Our story now takes us back to the Mediterranean, where, since the Napoleonic wars, a new situation had arisen, for the shadow of Russia was beginning to fall over Constantinople and the Dardanelles, and was causing the strategic centre of gravity, so long located in the western basin, to move eastwards.

Russia had secured her first footing on the Black Sea as far back as 1696, when Peter the Great had finally succeeded, after three attempts, in wresting Azof from the Turks; and ever since then she had been slowly but steadily consolidating and expanding, and in her expansion groping instinctively towards warm water and the open sea. All through the eighteenth century England was too much engrossed in her long duel with France to pay much attention to the rise of Russia, and it was not until after Waterloo that the new menace, the shadow which was to cloud her foreign policy throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, began to take shape. The instinct of the British people, which seldom fails them in times of danger, correctly grasped the new issue. If Russia succeeded in establishing herself as a Mediterranean power, with Constantinople in her hands, she would become an intolerable threat to England's line of communications to the East; and thus England's policy, under the leadership first of Palmerston and then of Disraeli, became directed to the frustration of Russia's ambitions, and to the support of Turkey as the best means to that end.

It is beyond the scope of this book to follow in detail the interesting but intricate history of the Near East during the first half of the nineteenth century; only its broad outlines can be sketched. The Greek insurrection, which led to the independence of Greece in 1832, was the first landmark. During the struggle the Sultan called

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in the aid of his powerful vassal, Mehemet Ali of Egypt, with the result that the latter, despising his master and egged on by France, who hoped to regain her control over Egypt, soon after rebelled against him. Overrunning Palestine and Syria,[1] Mehemet Ali actually threatened Constantinople, and the Sultan was only rescued by the Czar, who saw in the conflict a good opportunity for forwarding his policy. Turkey was saved by Russian ships and Russian bayonets, but she had to pay the price. The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833 practically made her the vassal of her powerful protector, and one of its articles stipulated that the Straits were to be closed to the warships of all nations except Russia. Aroused to the danger, England and France patched up their differences and united to meet the common menace. After long and complicated diplomatic negotiations, the Treaty of London in 1841 finally secured the annulment of the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, while Mehemet Ali was made to restore his conquests and revert to his former position as a vassal of the Porte.

Foiled thus in his first great attempt to secure control of the Straits, and realizing that England was the main obstacle to his ambitions, the Czar changed his tactics and tried bribery. It was not, however, until 1853, that a favourable opportunity presented itself. In that year, knowing that Palmerston had been replaced by the peace-loving Lord Aberdeen, and believing that he had secured the benevolent neutrality of Austria and Prussia, Nicholas I. made his famous proposals to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. "We have on our hands," he said, "a sick man, a very sick man, whom no doctor can

[1] It will be remembered that it was as a counterstroke to the spread of Mehemet Ali's French-backed influence into Arabia that the Indian Government decided on the occupation of Aden.

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cure," and he went on to suggest how the sick man's estates might, on his decease, be profitably shared between Russia and England. England's share was to be Egypt and Crete. The British Ambassador, however, refused to consider the bargain, and Nicholas was therefore forced to revert to his former policy, and to try to achieve his end in despite of England. He was encouraged in this hope, just like Germany in 1914, by the belief that the "nation of shopkeepers" had become decadent lovers of peace at any price, and that the Aberdeen Government would submit to anything rather than fight, and he accordingly laid his plans for the subjugation of Turkey. An occasion for quarrel was not far to seek. There was continual trouble over the pilgrims to the Holy Places, and, when the Czar's demands in this connection had been acceded to by Turkey, Nicholas put forward the further claim to be acknowledged as the protector of all the Sultan's Christian subjects. Backed up by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the able British Ambassador at the Porte, the Sultan rejected this preposterous demand, whereupon Nicholas set his waiting armies in motion, crossed the frontier, and seized, as a "pledge," the Turkish provinces north of the Danube. Turkey then declared war, and British and French squadrons were sent to the Bosphorus "for the security of British and French interests, and, if necessary, for the protection of the Sultan." The Russians, however, who, as has been said, thoroughly despised the British Government, were not a whit deterred, and proceeded to attack and destroy the Turkish Black Sea fleet in the harbour of Sinope. This at last effectually roused the allies, and, after demanding in vain the immediate evacuation of the conquered provinces, even the pacific Aberdeen was driven to

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declare war in March, 1854. Truly did Kinglake write of him that "he drew down war by suffering himself to have an undue horror of it."

While, however, troops were being assembled at Varna to assist the Turks on the line of the Danube, Russia, in response to pressure from Austria, did evacuate the provinces whose occupation had been the immediate pretext of the war; but both in France and England enthusiasm for the war was by that time running high, and neither country was in a mood to draw back. The objective was therefore transferred to Sebastopol, the famous fortress in the Crimea, upon which the Russian Black Sea fleet was based. "There is no prospect of a safe and honourable peace," wrote the War Minister to Lord Raglan, the British Commander, "until the fortress is reduced and the fleet taken or destroyed."

Accordingly, in September, a combined British, French, and Turkish force, numbering some sixty-three thousand, was transferred to the Crimea, and landed, without opposition, about thirty miles north of Sebastopol by the 18th. Moving south, the allies forced the passage of the Alma on the 20th, and three days later were in sight of the fortress. Instead, however, of attacking at once, when there was a good chance of carrying it by a *coup de main,* they decided to march round it to the south, where there were some bays where better communication could be maintained with the fleets. On arrival at the south front, it was found to be much stronger than the north, and the allies thereupon sat down on the Chersonese Upland, and began the disembarkation of heavy artillery and deliberate preparations for a siege. Meanwhile the Russian field army, under Menschikoff, which had withdrawn into Sebastopol after its defeat at the Alma, extricated itself again and

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retired into the middle of the peninsula ; but before doing so Menschikoff ordered the fleet to be scuttled at the entrance to the harbour, and the ships' crews and guns landed to assist in the defence of the fortress. The allies were not ready to begin operations until October 18, and, as this delay had allowed the enemy, under the able leadership of Todleben, ample time to strengthen their defences, the first attack failed. Lord Wolseley wrote of this that we waited "to knock down works that did not exist upon our first arrival, and which were actually built during the time that we squandered in landing guns." The combatants then settled down to a regular siege, which was only broken by two attempts at relief by Menschikoff, which were repulsed, at Balaclava on October 25, and at Inkerman on November 5. The northern front of the fortress was, however, left uninvested, so that throughout the siege the Russians were able to introduce reinforcements and supplies from that quarter. The hardships endured by the troops during the winter of 1854-55, and the appalling loss of life which resulted from them, caused such a wave of indignation in England that Aberdeen was swept from office and Palmerston installed in his stead ; and shortly afterwards Nicholas died, broken-hearted at the failure of his armies to expel the invaders.

The accession of the new Czar, Alexander II., raised hopes of peace, and, in March, 1855, negotiations were actually begun at Vienna. They broke down, however, over the future status of the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, and the war went on. In May, an important success was achieved by the capture of Kertch, at the entrance to the Sea of Azof, which severed what had till then been the enemy's best line of communication, down the Don River, with the beleaguered fortress.

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Meanwhile, the allies pressed their preparations for the final attack, no fewer than five hundred siege guns being installed for the preparatory bombardment. The first attempt, however, made on June 18, the anniversary of Waterloo, miscarried, both British and French failing to effect a lodgment in the enemy works. In August, the Russian field army made a third and final effort to relieve the city, but were beaten back by the French and Italians at the battle of the Tchernaya. This removed the defenders' last hope. Under the pitiless bombardment they were losing nearly a thousand men a day; the fortifications were in ruins, and the whole fortress was rapidly becoming a vast shambles. After three days' intensive artillery preparation, the final assault was launched on September 8, and although the British attack on the Redan failed, the key position of the Malakoff was carried by the French, and the next day Sebastopol fell. Its defence is computed to have cost the Russians half a million lives.

The work of completing the destruction of the dockyard was at once put in hand, and at the same time a force was detached to seize Kinburn, another important base on the Black Sea coast, near Odessa. This finally disposed the Czar to ask for terms, and in February, 1856, the Treaty of Paris was signed. A "hands off Turkey" policy was confirmed, and a clause included to check Russia's naval ambitions by neutralizing the Black Sea. No warships of any nation were to be allowed to enter it, and no arsenals or naval stations were to be erected on its shores.

Thus, at first sight, it seemed that the war, costly as it had been, had achieved its purpose. The Russian tide had been rolled back from Constantinople, and the "sick man" given a fresh chance of recovery. But its

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results proved to be short-lived. Turkey remained uncured and incurable, and Russia found, only fifteen years later, in the Franco-Prussian war, a favourable opportunity to regain what she had lost. During the critical period of the Siege of Paris, the Czar bought over Bismarck by a promise of continued neutrality, and then addressed a letter to the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Paris, stating that he no longer considered himself bound by those clauses of the Treaty which limited his sovereign rights in the Black Sea. With France prostrate, and Austria practically a vassal of Prussia, England, then under Gladstone, had no choice but acceptance, and the hard-won results of the Crimean War were thus torn up.

The renewal of the Russian threat to Constantinople was the more serious because, in 1869, the Suez Canal, originally projected by Napoleon, and revived by de Lesseps, had been officially opened to traffic. The cutting of this canal forms the greatest landmark of modern times in the history of British Imperial communications. During its construction English statesmen were far from enthusiastic. The plan was French and therefore suspect. It was argued that the cost of making the canal would be so great that it would never pay commercially, and from this it was deduced that politics and not business were at the bottom of the scheme, and that the real aim of the French was to threaten the security of British communications with India. Even Palmerston was alarmed. In a letter written at the time we find him full of gloomy forebodings. "It requires only a glance at the map of the world," he writes, "to see how great would be the naval and military advantage to France, in a war with England, to have such a short cut to the Indian Seas, while we

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should be obliged to send ships and troops round the Cape. Thorwenel proposes, indeed, that the passage of ships of war should be forbidden, as at the Dardanelles; but I presume he does not expect us to receive such a proposal, except with a decently suppressed smile. Of course the first week of a war between France and England would see fifteen thousand or twenty thousand Frenchmen in possession of the Canal, to keep it open for them and shut for us."

England, therefore, gave no assistance to de Lesseps, who had to struggle on as best he could against difficulties which would have broken the heart of a lesser man. But with the actual opening of the Canal it soon became clear that it was a paying proposition, and when in 1875 the bankrupt Khedive was forced to sell his shares, Disraeli, with one of his lightning flashes of genius, snapped them up for £4,000,000, and thus made England at one stroke the principal shareholder and predominant partner. The story goes that the French envoy in Egypt, who was playing billiards when the news of the sale reached him—like Bazaine while St. Privat was being fought—was so angry that he broke his cue in half. Disraeli's coup had, in fact, defeated the second French attempt to dominate Egypt just as effectively as Nelson's victory of the Nile had defeated the first, and had, in addition, secured an excellent investment, for the shares are now worth over £30,000,000, and bring in an annual revenue of £1,000,000.

The Suez Canal cut down the time of passage to India by about two-thirds, and at the same time greatly reduced its dangers and uncertainties. These advantages, however, were accompanied by a corresponding disadvantage from the point of view of defence. The

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Cape route is an ocean route, and its safety, given that string of essential bases along its course which England during her wars of the eighteenth century had acquired, was a comparatively easy matter. The Suez route, on the other hand, leads through the Mediterranean, an inland sea flanked along its entire length by potential enemies, and with its most vital sector, the Canal itself, passing through a country not at that time under British control. Not only therefore did it become increasingly important to hold Russia off from the Dardanelles, but inevitably also the destiny of Egypt, from 1869 onwards, became irrevocably linked up with that of the British Empire, and the protection of the Canal itself one of the very corner-stones of British imperial defence.

In the meantime, affairs in the Balkans had again drifted to a crisis. Encouraged by internal troubles in Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro rose against her, but were barbarously crushed, and Russia was forced to intervene to save them. After prolonged and complicated attempts by the diplomats to preserve peace, the Russo-Turkish war eventually broke out in 1877. This time, however, Russia took steps to ensure the neutrality of England, for in reply to a reminder from the British Government that the security of Constantinople, Egypt, and the Suez Canal was considered of vital importance, she replied that she had no intention of seizing the first, and that the two latter would be kept outside the sphere of operations. After some checks and reverses, notably at Plevna and the Shipka Pass, the Russian armies eventually beat down the Turkish resistance, and by the end of the year were threatening Constantinople. The British Government thereupon renewed its warning, to which the Czar repeated his assurances that the

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Dardanelles would not be occupied. In March, 1878, the Turks were compelled to sign the Treaty of San Stephano, the practical result of which was the creation of an enlarged Bulgaria, under the protection of Russia, extending to the Ægean. Once again Russia's long cherished dream, the control of Constantinople and the Straits, seemed to be within her grasp, and once again it was England who wrested it from her. Disraeli, fortunately, was at the helm, and he, like Palmerston before him, fully realized the menace that Russia's arrival on the Mediterranean would be to British interests, a menace even greater at that time, before England had acquired a firm footing in Egypt, than it became subsequently. Supported by Austria, who was jealous of Russia's predominance in the Balkans, he therefore insisted that the terms of the Treaty should be overhauled by the Powers; and when Russia demurred, sent the British Fleet into the Sea of Marmora, called up the Army reserves, and brought eight Indian regiments to Malta—the first occasion when Indian troops were brought to Europe. At the same time a secret compact was made with Turkey, by which England was allowed to occupy Cyprus in return for a promise of armed help in the event of further encroachments by Russia in Asia Minor.

Disraeli's determination, together with the attitude of Austria, eventually won the day. The famous Congress of Berlin was convened, with Bismarck as "honest broker," and the resulting Treaty of Berlin, signed in July, 1878, upset the Russian schemes for securing a predominating influence in the Balkans. Disraeli returned home in triumph, boasting that he had brought back "peace with honour." Not only had Russia again been thrust back from Constantinople and the

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Straits, but England had secured, in Cyprus, a useful outpost against further threats of aggression.

Meanwhile in Egypt the Khedive, who had only gained temporary financial relief from the sale of his Canal shares, continued blithely down the path to bankruptcy, until in 1876 England and France were forced to step in and establish a joint financial control in order to safeguard their interests. The resulting discontent led, in 1882, to Arabi's revolt. Gladstone, then in power, took up the challenge, and made it known that England would intervene to uphold the established régime, in concert with France and Turkey if possible, but if necessary alone. M. Gambetta, the French Premier, declared himself ready to co-operate, but before any definite programme could be arranged, his ministry fell, and his successor, M. Freycinet, reversing his policy, refused to commit himself to anything beyond the despatch of a combined fleet. Arabi, unimpressed, proceeded to arm the populace and fortify Alexandria. The British Admiral, Seymour, protested, whereupon Arabi ostensibly agreed to cease the work; but the searchlights of the fleet, suddenly switched on shore, showed that it was continuing secretly by night. A report written by an Egyptian officer, found subsequently in one of the batteries, complained of this use of the searchlights as most unsporting! Seymour then sent an ultimatum demanding the surrender of the forts, and when this was refused left the harbour and steamed out to bombarding range. It was a critical moment in the history of Egypt. France, through her admiral, had to decide whether she would stand by England and share both the immediate dangers and ultimate rewards of her policy, or withdraw. Still exhausted after her war with Prussia, suspecting a Bismarckian trap, and averse to

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new military commitments, she chose the latter course, and while the British Fleet cleared for action, the French sailed off to Port Said.

The bombardment of Alexandria on July 11, 1882, is of interest as being one of the very few cases in history where ships' guns have silenced shore batteries. The duel, however, was not an even one, as the British guns and gunners were much superior and the Egyptian forts of poor construction; and yet, in spite of this, the action lasted all day, and although the forts were eventually silenced, little material damage was done. Two days later, to stop disorder, marines and bluejackets were landed and the city occupied, the seamen being replaced shortly afterwards by troops hastily collected from the Mediterranean stations. Arabi retired inland, and the Khedive placed himself under British protection. The die was thus cast, and England definitely committed to a campaign to restore the situation in Egypt, with far-reaching results which no one could then foresee. Parliament voted the necessary funds, and an expeditionary force of two divisions and one cavalry brigade, some 20,000 men in all, was rapidly assembled and sent out under Sir Garnet Wolseley, to co-operate with a force sent from India. There followed a brilliant little campaign which is a masterpiece of its kind. Letting it become known in Alexandria, which, as in 1914, was a hotbed of spies, that his intention was to operate from that city and Aboukir, Wolseley secretly arranged that the Navy should seize the two ends of the Canal, and then, transferring his force by night to Port Said, landed at Ismailia. Thus at one stroke he outwitted Arabi, and also secured the Canal as a base of operations before the other Powers interested had time to protest. He then advanced on Cairo, and after several minor engagements



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stormed the Egyptian entrenched position at Tel-el-Kebir on September 13, after a skilful night approach. Giving the enemy no time to recover, Wolseley then pushed Sir Drury Lowe, with some five hundred sabres, straight on to Cairo, a daring move which was rewarded thirty-six hours later by the surrender to this handful of cavalry of the capital, with Arabi himself and ten thousand men, without a shot being fired.

The news of this brilliant little campaign, thus brought to a successful conclusion in just over a month, infuriated the nations of Europe, who had been waiting complacently to hear of England's discomfiture, and they sought relief in a storm of protestations against the irregularity of her conduct, both in acting alone without a mandate, and in seizing and using the Canal as a base. France in particular, realizing too late what she had missed by having been afraid to co-operate, headed the chorus of disapproval; but she could do no more. England had paid the piper by suppressing Arabi's revolt and restoring order, and she was therefore entitled to call the tune. Gladstone did his utmost to avoid a permanent occupation, but events were too strong for him, for both the internal condition of Egypt itself and developments in the Soudan rendered evacuation impossible. The result was that when the British Empire had to meet its next great challenge, the Suez Canal, the vital link in its chain of communications, was safely in its keeping.

By the international Convention of 1888 (which was not, however, ratified by England until 1904), the Canal was declared neutral, "free and open in time of peace and war to all vessels of commerce or war without distinction of flag."

Meanwhile, in the Far East, the close of the nineteenth

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century saw the acquisition of one more naval base. The Admiralty had expressed, from time to time, a wish for a station further north than Hong Kong, and in 1885 Fort Hamilton, a fine, natural, island harbour off the southern end of Korea, was actually occupied; but it was abandoned two years later. Shortly after, the whole situation in the Pacific underwent a sudden and complete change as a result of Japan's decisive defeat of China in 1894-5. As the fruits of victory, the Japanese claimed Formosa and the Liaotung Peninsula, and the latter demand at once brought them into collision with Russia. Russia, thwarted at Constantinople, had been reaching out to the Pacific for the ice-free port she coveted, and had fastened her eyes upon Port Arthur. Assuming, therefore, the rôle of protector of China, and backed by France and Germany, she demanded the restoration of the Liaotung Peninsula, and the Japanese, at that time friendless and alone, had no choice but to comply. They were soon undeceived as to the real aims of the European Powers. In 1897 Germany seized the opportunity of the murder of two of her missionaries to occupy Kiaochau, where she proceeded to construct a fortified naval base at Tsing-tau. Russia, not to be outdone, thereupon seized Port Arthur, and to the indignation of Japan, the helpless Chinese were forced to accept the *faits accomplis* and agree to the lease of both these important ports. England, who had hitherto remained a passive spectator, then roused herself, and feeling that her prestige demanded a share of the spoils, obtained the lease of Wei-hei-wei. The Convention which effected the lease stated that its object was "to provide Great Britain with a suitable naval base in North China for the better protection of British trade in the neighbouring seas," and gave her "the right to erect fortifications, station troops,

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or take any other measures necessary for defensive purposes."

It was at first intended to fortify Wei-hei-wei, but this idea had to be abandoned on the grounds of economy, and the port, although garrisoned, was maintained merely as a flying base and sanatorium for the Fleet. As such it was used during the Boxer troubles of 1900, the first "spasmodic protest," as Dr. Holland Rose puts it, "of a body which the dissectors believed to be ready for operation."

The century closed with the South African War, in which all the inherent weaknesses of the Empire seemed to its enemies to be demonstrated at the same time. There is no need to go into either the causes of the war or the course of operations. Except for the help given by a naval brigade fighting as soldiers, it was a war waged purely by the Army, with the Navy providing the necessary transport for men and material. The result of the war was, however, of great importance, as it decided that South Africa was to remain within the Empire, and thus finally sealed the security of the Cape route to the East, an alternative route which the continual menace in the eastern Mediterranean of Russia, and later of the Germano-Turkish alliance, was rendering increasingly desirable. The war, therefore, may be said to have made a definite contribution towards the consolidation of British sea power.

The nineteenth century had thus seen Singapore, Hong Kong, Aden, Cyprus, Egypt, and Wei-hei-wei added to the military commitments of the Empire, while Freetown in Sierra Leone, originally founded at the end of the eighteenth century as a home for liberated slaves, and then used as a base for the fleet engaged in suppressing the slave trade, had also become a regular

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defended port. On the other hand, these additional commitments had been to some extent counterbalanced by contractions elsewhere. The Ionian Islands, captured, it will be recalled, as a temporary war anchorage in the Napoleonic struggle, had been transferred in 1864 to Greece, while Heligoland, with a shortsightedness which was to have serious results, was bartered away by Lord Salisbury to Germany, in 1890, in exchange for Zanzibar. In addition, the defences of certain of the less important ports had been abandoned, such, for example, as Bathurst in Gambia, Barbadoes, Port of Spain in Trinidad, and Georgetown in British Guiana. These reductions were the outcome of the introduction, in the second half of the century, of a more systematic policy in Imperial Defence, by which the whole network of maritime bases held by the Army was periodically passed under review, and each port which it was considered essential to defend, allotted a garrison and a scale of armament commensurate with its value and its vulnerability to attack. No longer, as in the bad old days of "independent companies," was each place considered as an isolated unit for purposes of defence, but as one link in the great Imperial chain, the security of which was vital to all. At the same time, the important principle came to be generally acknowledged that the self-governing Dominions should shoulder, as far as possible, the burden of their own defence. In accordance with this principle, by 1871 British regulars had been withdrawn from Australia and New Zealand, and also from Newfoundland, where the harbour of St. John had been garrisoned since the seventeenth century.

The two Canadian naval bases of Halifax and Esquimalt, however, remained in English keeping until 1906, and the South African ports until after the Great War.

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## CHAPTER IX

# THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE South African War had shown very clearly that there was something wrong with the Empire's organization for war. "If you look back over the present century," said Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords in January, 1900, after the disasters of Magersfontein, Stormberg, and Colenso, "you will see that there have been four occasions in which the British Government has engaged in war. On each occasion, the opening of them was not prosperous. These were the Walcheren expedition, the Peninsular War, the Crimean Expedition, and now the South African War. In all these cases, at first —in the case of Walcheren not only at first—there were lamentable losses. We cannot have been so unlucky as to have fought four times and to have lighted upon the most incompetent and worthless Ministers that the world has ever produced. It is evident that there is something in your machinery that is wrong. I do not think that the British Constitution as at present worked is a good fighting machine. . . . It is unequalled for producing prosperity, happiness, and liberty in time of peace; but now, in time of war, when great Powers with enormous forces are looking at us with no gentle or kindly eye, it becomes us to think whether we must not in some degree modify our arrangements in order to enable ourselves to meet the danger that at any moment may arise." Fortunately, there were men in the country who realized this fact, and the period between the South African and the



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Great Wars is one of improvement in the whole naval and military system. Within the limits of the subject of this book, it is unnecessary to do more than mention the reorganization of the Army, so effectively carried out by Lord Haldane, the evolution of the Colonial Defence Committee into the Committee of Imperial Defence, the growth of partnership with the Dominions, and perhaps most important of all, the creation of trained naval and military staffs, a measure which at last rendered possible efficient co-operation, both in peace and war, between the two Services.

So far as our subject is concerned, the period of 1900 to 1914 is one of continued consolidation of the Empire and of the naval power on which it rested, but with a gradual change in the strategical centre of gravity. International politics were bringing about a re-grouping of the nations, culminating eventually in their division into the two camps of the Great War. This re-grouping considerably altered the problem of Imperial defence, for over it all hung the menace of German naval ambitions. The development of these ambitions is of great interest, as it revealed throughout a complete misconception of the foundations of true sea power. Germany thought that she could become a great naval Power by merely building ships. The organization of the British Empire was incomprehensible to her; she could not see the necessity for its network of maritime bases overseas. "What is the sense," wrote Dehn, "of this seizure of hundreds of islands and of thousands of territories in all quarters of the globe? There is no land or sea Power capable of maintaining for ever such a system of occupation. A good shove and the ill-jointed mosaic falls in ruins." "When the moment came for Germany to strike," wrote Archibald Hurd during the war, "the British

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Empire was to fall to pieces, and the Germans were to take what they liked of it. That is what the people of Germany were led to believe. The goal was to be reached by the exercise of sea power, giving length of reach to the supreme German army. The German troops were to be escorted by the fleet to any part of the world where German ambition had a task to perform. Germans were told by Ratzel that 'the present great naval superiority of Britain is a relic from the past, surviving into the present. The old sharp contrast between sea Powers and land Powers is gone. The nineteenth century wars, which were decided exclusively by land, will soon be looked upon with wonder.'" It is astonishing that a nation, as a whole, could so misread history as to get such a completely false impression of what constitutes true sea power, and of what is necessary to give freedom of action to a navy, and this in spite of the outstanding example of the helplessness of a fleet without naval bases, which had been provided by Russia a few years earlier. There is something heroically tragic in that last long voyage of the Russian Baltic fleet to the East, with no friendly stations on the road at which it could coal or refit, and in its final arrival off Korea, worn out and unfit for action in every way, only to fall an easy prey to the Japanese, who were waiting for it within close reach of their own bases.

Von Tirpitz alone, perhaps, realized the truth. "As a thorough-going cruiser war," he wrote to the Kaiser in 1897, "and a war on the high seas against England and other great States is altogether excluded by our lack of foreign bases and by Germany's geographical position—the foreign admiralties know this quite well—what we need is a battle fleet which can be stationed between Heligoland and the Thames." In the famous Navy Bill

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of 1900, he further stated : "To protect Germany's sea trade and colonies in the existing circumstances there is only one means—Germany must have a battle fleet so strong that even for the adversary with the greatest sea Power a war against it would involve such dangers as to imperil the world." In other words, he realized that Germany could never hope to operate in distant waters ; she could only hope to crush British sea power by directly threatening England herself. Nevertheless, although it must have been obvious that this end could only be achieved by staking everything on a fleet action early in the war, the vaunted navy of Germany was allowed to rust behind the protection of its coast defences. "The German Staff felt," writes Mr. Winston Churchill, "that even if this was the best chance for a trial of strength, it was still a chance so hazardous and even so forlorn that it was not worth taking, and their battle fleet remained hoarded up in harbour for an igominious day, imposing upon the British, no doubt, a continued and serious expenditure of our resources for naval purposes, gaining for Germany substantial advantages of a secondary character, but not exercising any decisive influence upon the whole course of the war."

Although, however, when the "Day" came, the German navy failed to pull its weight, the potential threat of its growth during the years from 1900 to 1914 involved important consequences. It placed a great strain on Britain's finances in order to maintain the two-power standard, and it shifted the naval centre of gravity from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, and so made necessary a greater degree of protection by the Army of the ports in Great Britain. Sir Arthur Wilson summed up the situation very pithily when he said : "You cannot expect the Navy to play international football without a

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goalkeeper," and the goalkeeper had to be provided by the Army. In addition, the old bogey of invasion, dormant since the days of Napoleon, was raised once more, and since the Admiralty were unable to guarantee complete immunity from seaborne attack, a portion of our small Army had to be definitely set aside for home defence. Finally, an atmosphere of tension and continual alarms was created, for every move of Germany had to be closely examined to see how it would affect British sea power. The Agadir incident of 1911 nearly precipitated the crisis. "Great Britain," to quote Mr. Churchill again, "having consulted the atlas, began to wonder what bearing a German naval base on the Atlantic coast of Africa would have upon her maritime security, 'observing,' as the sailors say when they have to write official letters to each other, that such a fact must be taken in conjunction with German activities at Madeira, and in the Canaries, with the food routes and trade routes from South America and South Africa which converged and passed through these waters." Mr. Churchill later put the whole problem of our sea power *vis-à-vis* Germany very clearly in a speech at Glasgow, which created great fury in Berlin. "The purposes of British naval power," he said, "are essentially defensive. We have no thoughts, and we have never had any thoughts of aggression, and we attribute no such thoughts to other Great Powers. There is, however, this difference between the British naval power and the naval power of the great and friendly Empire—of Germany. The British Navy is to us a necessity, and, from some points of view, the German navy is to them more in the nature of a luxury. Our naval power involves British existence. It is existence to us; it is expansion to them. We cannot menace the peace of a single continental hamlet, no

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matter how great and supreme our Navy may become. But, on the other hand, the whole fortunes of our race and Empire, the whole treasure accumulated during so many centuries of sacrifice and achievement, would perish and be swept utterly away if our naval supremacy were impaired."

Germany's ambitions, however, were not only naval. Mistrusting, perhaps, in her heart of hearts, her ability to crush British sea power by direct action, she sought, like Napoleon, to overcome it by extending her grip on the land. Her Eastern policy, the "Drang nach Osten," of which so much was heard before the war, with its aim of driving a German-controlled road across Europe to the Middle East, was an attempt to threaten British sea communications at their most vulnerable point, where pressure from the land could to the greatest extent be substituted for pressure from the sea.

This two-fold ambition of Germany, her bid for sea power, and her simultaneous attempts to dominate Europe and the Middle East by land, made war inevitable, and England had once again to take up arms to preserve the balance of power.

The outbreak of the Great War saw the British Main Fleet concentrated in home waters, with detachments for the protection of the main sea routes securely based on the various stations overseas held for them by the Army (it must have made Nelson and Napoleon stir in their graves to hear France informed directly war broke out that she was to use Malta as if it were Toulon !) ; the small but efficient expeditionary force was ready at home to move to any part of the world ; and the Dominions were capable not only of defending themselves, but also of affording assistance in other theatres.

In a war of this magnitude it is almost impossible to

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classify operations into different categories, and it can be said with justice that there were none which did not react, in one form or another, upon the naval situation. An attempt will, however, be made to examine shortly those campaigns which may be said to have had the most direct effect upon the maintenance of sea supremacy.

The initial operations overseas resembled those of the Napoleonic wars in that the first step was to capture all the enemy's outlying colonies and possessions. These operations were made possible by the existence of our network of defended bases, from which the necessary naval and military forces could be launched. "On an August morning," writes Mr. Churchill, "behold the curious sight of respectable Liberal politicians sitting down deliberately and with malice aforethought to plan the seizure of the German colonies in every part of the world! A month before, with what horror and disgust would most of those present have averted their minds from such ideas! But our sea communications depended largely upon the prompt denial of these bases or refuges to the German cruisers. Accordingly, with maps and pencils, the whole world was surveyed, six separate expeditions were approved in principle and remitted to the staffs for study and execution. An enterprising Captain had already on the outbreak of war invaded the German colony of Togoland. We now proposed, in conjunction with the French, to attack the Cameroons—a much more serious undertaking. General Botha had already declared his intention of invading German South-West Africa. The New Zealand and Australian Governments wished at once to seize Samoa and the German possessions in the Pacific. An Anglo-Indian expedition was authorized for the attack of German East Africa." In addition, Tsingtau was invested by a Japanese Army,

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assisted by a small British contingent, and captured, by regular siege methods, in five weeks, the last port on which the German Pacific squadron could be based being thus lost to the enemy. The plight of this squadron, commanded by von Spee, was, as a result, rendered most unenviable, and must have at last impressed on German naval strategists that sea power depends upon bases as much as upon ships. Von Spee was originally based on Tsingtau, but, being forced by the Allied attack to leave this fortress, he sailed for the Pacific. Having no other defended ports on which to rely, he divided his forces and began a series of raids, of which the exploits of the *Emden* in the Indian Ocean are the most noteworthy. Although the elements of his squadron remained in being for some time and achieved a certain measure of success, it was obvious that it could only be a question of time before the lack of coaling and refitting stations made them an easy prey to the British ships, who were operating from secure bases, held for them by the Army. "Von Spee," says Mr. Churchill, "was a cut flower in a vase; fair to see, yet bound to die, and to die very soon if the water was not continually renewed." This "water" was coal, and coaling for the German ships could only be effected by colliers, directed to a given rendezvous by wireless. The control of the wireless in the area thus became an essential preliminary step towards the destruction of the raiders, and New Zealand and Australian military contingents accordingly seized Samoa and New Guinea respectively, and destroyed the enemy wireless stations at Nauru and Rabaul.

It is of interest to note, in passing, that it was the lack of the support that should be provided by the Army that enabled the *Konigsberg* to achieve a spectacular success in the destruction of the *Pegasus,* for the latter was

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caught carrying out minor engine repairs, and helpless, in the undefended harbour of Zanzibar.

So far as the main theatre of operations—the Western Front—is concerned, the Army's contribution to sea power was of two types: defensive operations for the protection of the Channel ports and offensive operations to help the Navy to defeat the submarine menace.

It is unnecessary to go into details of the continual bitter fighting, from the first battle of Ypres in 1914 to the grim struggles in March and April, 1918, to prevent the Germans from reaching the Channel ports: it is equally futile to speculate as to what would have been the results had they succeeded in doing so. The Army was probably fighting as much for its own existence as in support of sea power, so completely are all issues intermingled in a war of this magnitude; but it is evident from the picture that Mr. Churchill paints in *The World Crisis* that the Admiralty considered the retention of these ports almost vital. "I do trust you realize how damnable it will be," he wrote to Sir John French, "if the enemy settles down for the winter along lines which comprise Calais, Dunkirk, or Ostend. There will be continual alarms and greatly added difficulties."

The submarine campaign, however, was undoubtedly the greatest danger to British sea power, and in fact brought us within an ace of defeat. The aid of the Army was called for against the bases of the enemy submarines just as it had been in previous wars against the lairs of surface privateers. In 1917 an operation was planned, which, although it never materialized, is of such interest in this connection that a few details may be given, taken from the account by Colonel Dobbie, published in the *Royal Engineers' Journal:* "The British Navy was faced with a very difficult task. The German submarine

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campaign was becoming more and more difficult to deal with, and was taking a continuous and ever-increasing toll of the shipping on which we depended for our supplies of food and the sinews of war. Our ships were being sunk considerably faster than we could build, and it was only a matter of time before a situation of the utmost gravity would arise. The German submarines were greatly helped in their operations by the proximity of their bases on the Belgian coast, and it was the opinion of the British Admiralty that the situation could not be materially eased until these bases were neutralized.

"This result could be achieved by operations from the sea, the air, or the land. As regards an attack from the sea, the strength of the German coastal batteries made this operation hazardous in the extreme. The whole of the Belgian coast in enemy occupation was protected by guns of the largest calibre, and in great numbers, covered by the strongest and most up-to-date defences, and the shooting of these guns, as our ships knew to their cost, was unpleasantly accurate and effective. An attack from the sea, therefore, was not an operation to be lightly undertaken. An attack from the air was also not likely to achieve the success desired. The German anti-aircraft defences were extraordinarily complete, and most efficiently organized, and in the nature of things no *decisive* result could be obtained from any air operations which were at that time possible. It was therefore decided that an attempt should be made to approach these bases from the land side, and this provided a special objective for the Army.

It was considered that the desired result would be sufficiently achieved if the land forces could gain enough ground on the coast so that heavy railway guns and howitzers could be mounted within effective range of the

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submarine base of Zeebrugge, and thus keep it under more or less continuous fire. By this means it was anticipated that the activities of the submarines would be so much hampered that the value of the port to the enemy would be almost discounted. For this reason the northern operations of the British Armies in 1917 were invested with special importance, in that they enabled the British Army to fulfil its functions—*i.e.*, assisting the French by occupying the attention of the Germans and assisting the British Navy by threatening Zeebrugge."

Part of the plan was to land the 1st Division with extra guns and tanks behind the right flank of the German forces, and for this purpose Admiral Bacon designed the remarkable "Bacon pontoons," each capable of holding one brigade with guns and tanks, which were to be pushed to the shore by monitors, covered by fire from the ships' guns. Circumstances elsewhere altered the whole situation and prevented this operation from materializing; but the details of the proposed scheme provide extremely interesting data for the student of combined operations.

The glory of the attacks undertaken later against the submarine bases of Zeebrugge and Ostend belongs to the Navy, and the Army can only claim a modest share by the assistance it gave by long range gun fire and by engaging the enemy's attention elsewhere; and also by remembering that the Royal Marines are half soldiers.

Before leaving the main European theatre of war, it is interesting to note certain other schemes for offensive naval action which were proposed, and the rôle which was allotted to the Army in these schemes. It had apparently been the intention, prior to the war, to institute, as in the Napoleonic wars, a close blockade of the enemy ports. This could not be done unless some

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advanced base were provided, and it was suggested that the islands of Borkum or Sylt should be seized for this purpose. "At least three or four brigades of the finest regular infantry we possessed," says Mr. Churchill, "were required for the storm of an island, though a smaller force would have sufficed to garrison it after it was taken." When the war actually broke out, Sir Arthur Wilson apparently thought the operation feasible, and "was even disposed to the much more hazardous and less fruitful enterprise of bombarding and storming Heligoland," which, as has been seen, Lord Salisbury, "with a complete detachment from strategic considerations," had exchanged, in 1890, for Zanzibar. It would be of great interest to know whether these plans, which had been first matured in 1907, for committing the Army to this most difficult of all operations were ever discussed in detail with the General Staff, as no mention of the latter is made in Mr. Churchill's book, although apparently the provisional approval of the War Council to the operation in principle was obtained "if and when circumstances should render it desirable." The necessary advanced bases having been seized, the further programme included the invasion of Schleswig-Holstein, carrying the war into the Baltic, and exploiting the command of that sea by landing Russian armies within ninety miles of Berlin. Whether these ambitious schemes were feasible or not, they clearly demonstrate once again that British naval power cannot be exerted without the preliminary capture of advanced bases by the Army.

The alternative to the Baltic scheme was that of the Dardanelles, a campaign which was undertaken primarily for the furtherance of sea power, but which has been so clouded by controversy that it is doubtful whether a true perspective of it will ever be obtainable in this genera-



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tion. The chief object was to open up free sea communication with Russia, so as to provide material to arm, train, and equip her vast man-power ; and there can be no doubt that the object was a very desirable one. Unfortunately, too much consideration was given to the end, and too little to the means available for attaining it. Whether the operation was practicable with the forces at that time available must for ever remain a matter for speculation, but in any case the only hope of success lay in a resolute combined attack, carefully planned and secretly and suddenly delivered. Instead of that, the elementary mistake was committed of launching ships, unsupported by troops, against a formidable land position. The lessons of three centuries of amphibious wars appear to have been completely forgotten. The War Council's decision of January 13, 1915, would be ludicrous had it not entailed such tragic results. The Admiralty was directed "to prepare a naval expedition to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula, with Constantinople as its objective." "It is almost inconceivable," as the Dardanelles Commission reported, "that anyone, whether military, naval, or civilian, could have imagined for one moment that Constantinople could be captured without military help on a somewhat large scale." How far the sailors really believed in the possibility of success is very doubtful. Mr. Churchill has said that, when the plan of forcing the Straits by naval action alone was discussed, both the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Staff seemed favourable to it. "No one at any time threw the slightest doubt upon its technical soundness. No one, for instance, of the four or five great naval authorities, each with his technical staff, who were privy, said : 'This is absurd. Ships cannot fight forts,' or criticized its details. On the contrary, they all treated

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it as an extremely interesting and hopeful proposal; and there grew up in the secret circles of the Admiralty a perfectly clear opinion favourable to the operation."

On the other hand, the Dardanelles Commission has recorded its view that Mr. Churchill "was carried away by his sanguine temperament, and his firm belief in the success of the undertaking which he advocated. Although none of his expert advisers absolutely expressed dissent, all the evidence laid before us leads to the conclusion that Mr. Churchill had obtained their support to a less extent than he himself imagined." The General Staff at the War Office were never called upon to give a considered opinion, although this very problem had been carefully examined by them in 1906. In that year a General Staff Memorandum had been prepared, which was accepted in principle by the Admiralty and by the Committee of Imperial Defence, and which "pointed out," to quote Sir William Robertson, "the difficulties of seizing the Gallipoli Peninsula, and advised that the attempt should not be made." Nevertheless, he goes on, this paper "was not brought to the notice of the War Council as a whole until February 19 . . . when too late to be of use." It is the opinion of General Callwell, who, as one largely responsible for the preparation of the 1906 Memorandum and also as Director of Military Operations in 1914-15, is a qualified judge, that had the General Staff been consulted, "the idea of a purely naval attack, either in the nature of trying to rush the passage or in the form that the attack actually took, would have been abandoned in deference to the representations that the soldiers must have made. For the military objections were manifest and were overwhelming."

However, the naval attack was made, and duly failed, as any student of amphibious war must have foreseen, and

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its only result was to sacrifice the vital factor of surprise, and render the task of the Army, when its assistance was subsequently called for, far more difficult and costly.

Perhaps few other incidents in war illustrate so well the value of a study of history in appreciating any strategical problem. It is almost inconceivable that anyone who had studied the story of Admiral Duckworth's passage of the Dardanelles and had read his memorandum on the operation, written in 1807, would not have seen that his statements were as true in 1915 as they were over a hundred years before. "Before the undertaking is again attempted," wrote Duckworth, "there is one condition on which my duty to my Sovereign will oblige me to insist. Having passed and repassed the Dardanelles, and having on the second occasion seen the batteries which were being erected, and which, when completed, as they must be by the present time, would render the work still more difficult and arduous, I must, as an officer, declare it to be my decided opinion that without the co-operation of a powerful body of land forces it would be a wanton sacrifice of the squadrons of both nations to attempt to force the passage. I do not pretend to be able to say what number of troops would be necessary; but, as your Excellency is commander-in-chief of all the military forces of your Sovereign in the Mediterranean, both land and naval, you can no doubt send for such a proportion of the troops you have under your command as may be equal to land and destroy the batteries of the Dardanelles, and, by occupying the principal posts, to render our return secure."

The full reasons for the initiation of other expeditions are also at present obscured by controversy. The Mesopotamian campaign undoubtedly had as its initial object the protection of the head of the Persian Gulf

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and the safeguarding of the South Persian oil-fields, upon which the Navy set great store. Once, however, these original objects had been achieved, by the occupation of the Basra area, other influences took charge and dictated the subsequent course of the operations.

The exact purpose of the expedition to Salonika is still more shrouded in mystery. If it had a "military" objective at all, in its initial stages, it was a naval one —to deny the port of Salonika to the enemy and prevent it being used as a base for depredations in the Ægean and the Mediterranean. Sir William Robertson, however, brings out clearly in his *Soldiers and Statesmen* that political considerations, mainly French, were at the bottom of the scheme, and that the General Staff were opposed to it. He quotes a Memorandum written by the latter in November, 1915, which says: "The only argument for holding it (Salonika) that is worth considering is to deprive the enemy of a submarine base. We cannot for a moment consider that as a sufficient justification for locking up an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men." It cannot therefore be said that the Salonika expedition was one undertaken primarily for the safeguarding of our sea power.

"The operations directed against the Turkish forces based on Palestine," however, to quote Sir William Robertson again, "were, in their early stages, both appropriate and profitable, in that they helped to secure an important link in the Imperial Communications—the Suez Canal." Instigated by Germany, the Turks made a direct attack on the Canal shortly after they entered the war, when some twelve thousand Turks and Bedouins struggled across the Sinai Peninsula, and early in February delivered a disjointed and half-hearted attack, which was easily repulsed. The Canal was defended at

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that time by a series of posts along its banks, with a screen of mobile troops pushed out in front. This was, of course, a thoroughly unsatisfactory arrangement, but it was not until the summer of 1916 that Sir Archibald Murray had organized the Army in Egypt sufficiently to take the offensive and move on El Arish. In the meantime a second attack was made by the enemy in August, 1916, prepared with greater care and under German leadership, but it also was defeated, with considerable loss. By the end of the year Murray had occupied El Arish and driven the Turks back to the line Gaza-Beersheba, and the Canal was thus at last freed from immediate danger. It was then realized that a favourable opportunity had arisen to deal the Turks a serious blow and drive them out of the war, and Allenby's brilliant campaign in Palestine was undertaken with this object.

The only other point on the main line of communication to the East to be directly attacked was Aden, which was invested on the land front by the Turks, in the summer of 1915, and besieged continuously throughout the remainder of the war. This necessitated a considerable reinforcement of the garrison, and the formation of an Aden Field Force to engage the enemy in the hinterland and hold him away from the harbour. Perim was also attacked on one occasion, in June, 1915, by a strong force of Turks, who crossed over by night in dhows from Sheikh Saad, but the attack was repulsed with loss by the Indian infantry garrison.

One other of the many "side-shows" of the Great War may be said to have been undertaken, partly, at any rate, in direct aid of sea power. This was the expedition to North Russia in 1918, one of the objects of which was to prevent the northern ports of European Russia from becoming bases for German submarines.

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Apart from all these actual operations, there is still another aspect of the Army's assistance to the Navy. The greatest weapon forged against the Central Powers was the economic blockade, and this was only really rendered possible by the fact that the Navy could control neutral merchant shipping by controlling the coal supplies for the ships' bunkers. The coaling stations of the world were in the hands of England, strongly held and guarded by the British Army, and it was this secure retention of these fuelling bases which probably helped as much to win the war as any of the more spectacular victories by land or sea.

To sum up briefly, it may be said that in the last war, as in all the great wars in which England has been engaged, the dominating factor was the control of the seas by the British Navy, which alone kept the allied nations supplied with their material needs, and enabled the allied armies to be transported to, and maintained in, the various theatres of war. This fact is generally recognized, but what is sometimes not realized is that this control of the seas, in its turn, was only rendered possible by the existence of the elaborate network of maritime bases all over the world, defended and garrisoned by the Army, from the safe shelter of which the Navy could operate.

November, 1918, saw one of the most spectacular events in naval history, when the German fleet struck its colours and surrendered to the Allies without a shot being fired. The defeat of Germany's armies, and the relentless pressure of the economic blockade upon her civil population, had brought about the collapse of her vaunted sea power, based as it was upon insecure foundations, just as completely as if her fleet had been destroyed upon the high seas.

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The German navy vanished, and its disappearance brought about a complete change in the naval situation. Great Britain was left at the Armistice with the most powerful fleet in all history, and there was no longer any threat to her supremacy in Home or Mediterranean waters; but the war had placed such a strain upon her financial resources that the maintenance of the pre-war two-power standard of naval strength was no longer possible. At the same time, the naval centre of gravity had moved eastwards. The war had left only two other nations with fleets comparable to that of the British, the United States of America and Japan. Both nations had suffered comparatively little in the struggle; both had, in the Pacific, important interests which in some cases were conflicting; and with China still in a welter of internal unrest, and a fruitful field for intriguers of every kind, it was clear that this ocean had become the storm centre, and that the British Empire, also vitally concerned in the Far East, must be capable of operating in its waters.

The universal war weariness, and the desire to do everything possible to reduce the chances of another conflict, led, in 1921, to the Washington Treaties and, as a corollary, to the termination of the special Anglo-Japanese alliance. There are three main aspects of the Washington Treaties which affect the subject of this book: the limitation of naval armaments, the establishment of a *status quo* area for coast defences, and the abandonment of the Chinese ports occupied after the Sino-Japanese war. So far as the limitation of armaments is concerned, the British Empire was clearly in a different category to other nations, as it alone is entirely dependent for its very existence upon its sea communications. The security of these is therefore vital, and demands an

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adequate number of those vessels which are especially suited for the work of policing the ocean trade routes. Limitations were, therefore, practically confined to laying down a comparative ratio for capital ships.

As has been emphasized, however, throughout this whole story, fleets are helpless without bases, and at the time of the Washington Treaties there was no base or dockyard, capable of dealing with capital ships, east of Malta. The limits of the zone in which the increase of coast defences was prohibited were therefore deliberately drawn so as to exclude Singapore, the only suitable harbour for the purpose. Thus the scheme was initiated for making Singapore into a first-class naval base, capable of accommodating battleships, and adequately defended so as to ensure its safety until the main fleet could arrive from Europe. Never was Raffles' foresight more clearly vindicated than to-day, when it has been decided to construct, at the city which he founded, a coast fortress which will, when completed, be second to none in the world.

The establishment of the *status quo* area for coast defences considerably affected the situation in the China Seas, as the area concerned embraced Hong Kong, which consequently lost some of its strategic value, although it remains one of the greatest commercial ports of the empire. As, in addition, it was agreed by the Treaty to return Wei-hai-wei to China, the Empire is now without any adequately defended naval station in those seas, on which a fleet could be based for offensive operations.

It is unnecessary to go into the vicissitudes of the Singapore scheme: the important thing is that the decision to continue with it has now been made. Once this decision had been taken, the main problem became

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one of safeguarding the route by which the main fleet could pass rapidly to the East. It has already been clearly seen, from the history of Gibraltar and Minorca in particular, that, just as the mobility of a fleet depends upon its bases, so the safety of bases in distant waters depends upon the timely arrival of the fleet. As a result of the war, considerable international changes had occurred along the main route to the East, the most important of which was the declaration of the independence of Egypt. The Suez Canal—"the jugular vein of the British Empire" as the late Kaiser called it—is of such vital importance that its defence must evidently remain in British hands. Complete freedom in this respect was therefore reserved in the agreement made with Egypt, and a British garrison is still maintained in that country for the purpose. The whole route is now guarded at all vital points by the Army. The safety of the Mediterranean section is still based on the two fortresses of Gibraltar and Malta, with Cyprus as a lightly held outpost in the eastern basin, the importance of the latter island lying rather in the menace it would be to British communications if in hostile hands than in its own intrinsic value as a maritime base. The delicate link of the Suez Canal is secured by our military control of Egypt and by our mandate in Palestine, which ensures that its defence can be undertaken at a safe distance, and not on the very banks, as was the case in 1915. The Red Sea and the western entrance into the Indian Ocean are watched by the fortified fuelling station of Aden, with Perim as its outpost in the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, while the Persian Gulf is secured by our mandate over Iraq, so that the Indian Ocean is thus practically enclosed by British or British-controlled lands. India has her main naval base at Bombay, and four other defended

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ports at Karachi, Madras, Calcutta, and Rangoon. Ceylon, the strategic centre of the Indian Ocean, has a fortified fuelling station at Colombo, while the fine harbour of Trincomali, abandoned as a naval base in 1904, will shortly, it is hoped, be revived as the headquarters of the East Indies squadron, which would be charged with the protection of the shipping in the Bay of Bengal until the arrival of the main fleet at Singapore.

The Straits of Malacca will be protected by Singapore itself, and the Southern Pacific by Australia and New Zealand, Australia maintaining her main naval station at Sydney, with a ring of defended ports in addition at Brisbane, Newcastle, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Albany, Fremantle, and Darwin; and New Zealand having four defended harbours, at Auckland and Wellington in North Island, and Lyttelton and Otago in South Island.

The development of aircraft and submarines, however, has undoubtedly tended to reduce the safety of the Mediterranean route. The Mediterranean is an inland sea, flanked along its entire length by potential enemies, and the alternative route to the East, via the Cape, has thus reassumed something of its old importance. Strategically, the Cape route is much safer, for it is an ocean route and possesses no dangerous defile, such as the Suez Canal. It is, moreover, well served with fuelling stations and harbours of refuge, the Atlantic portion being guarded by the defended ports of Freetown, in Sierra Leone, and St. Helena, and the Indian Ocean stretch by Mauritius, with its fortified harbour of Port Louis as a useful half-way house on the road to India. In South Africa itself, the main naval base is situated at Simon's Town, with defended harbours at Cape Town and Durban, and possibly also at Saldanha Bay.

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While the main routes to the East are, at present, strategically the most important, Imperial interests in the New World must also be safeguarded, and for this purpose there are the naval bases of Bermuda and Halifax, and the fortified station of Kingston in Jamaica. Only in the Pacific is there a serious gap in the chain of our maritime bases, a gap which no pressure of war has as yet caused us to fill, for between Esquimalt in Vancouver and Hong Kong the Empire has no defended port.

In Great Britain itself, the hub of the empire, the responsibilities of the Army embrace no fewer than fifteen defended coastal areas—Plymouth, Portland, Portsmouth, Newhaven, Dover, Thames and Medway, Harwich, Humber, Tees, Tyne, Firth of Forth, Clyde, Mersey, Milford Haven, and Severn; while in Ireland there are four—Belfast and Lough Swilly in the north, and Queenstown and Berehaven in the south. Plymouth, it may be noted, was one of the earliest defended ports of England, for according to the author of *The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye,* written in 1436, Edward III. fortified it for his wars with France.

> "To fortefye anone he dyd devyse
> Of Englyshe townes iii, that is to seye,
> Derthmouth, Plymmouth, the thyrde it is Foweye,
> And gaffe hem helpe and notable puissance,
> Wyth insistence set them in governaunce
> Upon the Pety Bretayn for to werre."

Thus, at home and overseas, the direct contribution of the Army to the maintenance of British sea power consists at the present time in the provision of armaments and garrisons at some thirty defended ports, excluding those which are the responsibility of the self-governing Dominions and India. Obviously, these garrisons and armaments do not in themselves guarantee the command

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of the sea ; it is not the defended port, but the fleet based upon it that is the controlling factor. All these harbours are defended at the request of the Admiralty, either as naval bases, fuelling stations, convoy assembly ports or ports of refuge for merchant shipping, in order to enable the Navy to fulfil its great tasks of controlling the sea routes which link together the various parts of the Empire, of safeguarding the vast volume of traffic that moves along them, and of moving and maintaining the striking forces of the Empire wherever they may be required.

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## CHAPTER X

# CONCLUSIONS

IN this chapter it is proposed to summarize shortly the main lessons which can be deduced from the history of the British Empire as to the part which the Army has played in the past, and can still play in the future, towards assisting the Navy in the maintenance of sea power.

The fundamental aim of British naval strategy must always be to safeguard the sea communications upon which, to quote the recent Imperial Conference, "the safety and welfare of all parts of the Empire depend." In order to do this, the first step is the removal of the enemy's main fleet, either by bringing it to battle and destroying it, or else, if it refuses battle, by driving it into its ports and confining it there. This must be the task of our main fleet, and under the cover thus afforded, the security of the sea routes and outlying parts of the Empire can be safely entrusted to detachments. Our own fleets, however, cannot operate freely without a suitable network of maritime bases, disposed at strategic points, where they can refuel and refit. In the old sailing days such bases were only required for careening and watering, and as harbours of refuge in bad weather, but nowadays the ever-increasing dependence of fleets upon regular supplies of fuel renders them more essential than ever.

As Mahan points out, it should be the policy of a maritime nation to acquire these bases whenever possible in



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peace, by foresight or by diplomacy, as England in olden days acquired Tangier and Bombay, or in modern times Singapore and Cyprus. If not secured in peace, they will have to be fought for and conquered in war, as is shown throughout the whole history of the wars by which the British Empire was built up. The opening stages of the wars of the Spanish Succession and of the French Revolution illustrate perhaps better than any other the helplessness of fleets without bases. The whole history of England in the Mediterranean is, in fact, in the main a story of attempts to secure suitable bases, from her first abortive occupation of Tangier to the secure position she holds to-day. "Since the final acquisition of Gibraltar and Malta," says Callwell, "the position of the British Empire as a leading Mediterranean power has never been questioned either in peace or war, and the possession of the two fortresses fixed that hold upon the waters of southern Europe which Charles II. dreamt of, and which Rooke and Leake and Stanhope, instigated by Marlborough, first definitely secured. Naval warfare is not a war of posts. But its true object, the breaking of the enemy's power at sea, cannot be achieved without posts."

Our Mediterranean bases were acquired primarily to facilitate naval operations in wars against France, but exactly the same process is found at work on the Cape route to India for another reason, the protection of trade. In the days of Clive this was a long and perilous road upon which England had no resting-place of her own, but it was gradually rendered secure, as the need arose, by the occupation of all the strategic points along its course, Freetown, St. Helena, the Cape, Mauritius, and Ceylon. Later, the maintenance of our sea power in the Indian Ocean led us to the military

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occupation of Singapore, Aden, and the head of the Persian Gulf; then the extension of our trade to China led to the acquisition of Hong Kong; and finally the opening of the Suez Canal added a still heavier commitment in the defence of Egypt. It is the same story in the New World, starting from the time of Cromwell's initial conquest and consolidation of Jamaica as an outpost against the power of Spain. The capture of St. Lucia in the War of American Independence was perhaps the most noteworthy event in this story as a remarkable example of the seizure of a suitable base for a special purpose, for, as has been seen, it was St. Lucia which rendered possible Rodney's great victory of the saints. It is interesting to see that exactly the same compelling force has driven the United States of America, who were, until half a century ago, without a single overseas naval base, to the acquisition of those she holds to-day, the Philippines, Samoa, Guam, the Hawaii Islands, Porto Rico, and the Panama Canal zone.

The next point to be made is that maritime bases must not be dependent upon the Navy for their immediate protection, for in that case the fleet becomes tied down to them and forfeits its mobility. The evil results of this are well illustrated by the case of Trincomali in 1782, where the failure to establish adequate shore defences was a severe handicap to the operations of the British squadron, and eventually led to the capture of the port by Suffren.

On the other hand, coast fortresses, just like fortresses in land warfare, cannot be expected to hold out indefinitely on their own resources: their ultimate safety must depend upon the maintenance of sea supremacy. All that can be done is to place them in a position to defend themselves for a certain definite period, before the expiration of which the fleet may be expected to come to

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their aid. This "period before relief" must naturally vary in each case, and must be worked out in accordance with the geographical position of the port and all the strategical factors concerned. It has been seen, in illustration of this, how Minorca was twice lost—in 1756 and again in 1782—in spite of a very gallant resistance in each case, because the Navy was unable to come to its aid before the resources of the defenders were exhausted; and how, on the other hand, Gibraltar was enabled to withstand the Great Siege of over three years because, on three occasions, the fleet was able to bring relief. That the safety of naval bases must ultimately depend upon the maintenance of sea supremacy is also well shown by the automatic collapse of the French bases after Nelson's victory of the Nile, and by the easy capture of the German overseas bases in the Great War.

The defence of maritime bases, whether naval dockyards and arsenals, important commercial ports, fuelling stations, or ports of refuge for merchant shipping, is, then, the first contribution which the Army makes to the maintenance of our sea power. It is a contribution which is by no means a light task, although often a thankless one. That it was efficiently performed during the last war is shown by the fact that only on one occasion, the "tip and run" bombardment of West Hartlepool in December, 1914, did the Germans attack one of our defended ports either at home or abroad, a sufficient testimony to the adequacy of the defences installed by the Army as a deterrent to such attacks. Since the war there have, of necessity, been alterations in the relative value of the various bases, due to the changed strategical situation, but the Army's obligation to defend them still continues. At the present time, for example, the approximate equivalent of a whole division, one-fifth of our



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expeditionary force, is employed on this duty, and locked up in various defended ports at home and abroad. It must be remembered, however, that these detachments are not a dead loss even from the Army's own purely selfish point of view, for unless its bases were adequately protected the Navy would not be able to control the seas, and would not therefore be able to guarantee the safe passage of the expeditionary force to any part of the world in which it may be called upon to fight.

The second task which the Army has to carry out in aid of sea power is to assist in combined operations against the enemy's maritime bases in war. In some cases the capture of the base itself may be the objective, with a view to depriving the enemy's fleet of its use, as was the case, for example, in the captures of Louisburg, Pondicherry, Sebastopol, and Tsing-tau. Such was also the case at Havana in 1762, although, as has been noted, the actual prizes taken in harbour in this operation were the practical equivalent of a great victory at sea. There are other cases, however, where the reduction of the fortress itself may be of secondary importance to the capture or destruction of the enemy's fleet sheltered within it. The Napoleonic Wars offer the most interesting examples of this kind, in the expeditions to the Helder in 1799, to Copenhagen in 1807, to Walcheren in 1809, and to Antwerp in 1814. If the enemy's fleet refuses to come out, operations of this nature are the only method of destroying it.

Even, however, when the enemy's main fleet has been decisively defeated or bottled up in harbour, and our own fleet is unchallenged on the high seas, it has been seen that the assistance of the Army is still required for the protection of trade, by the capture of the enemy's privateering or submarine bases. However powerful a navy

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may be, it cannot afford complete protection to its mercantile marine against these pests, unless their nests are destroyed. Supreme as the British Navy was after Trafalgar, it found itself unable to stamp out the French privateers, and the Army had therefore to be called in to reduce their bases, such as Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, and Mauritius and Java in the Indian Ocean, and the same story was repeated in the late war. It is, in fact, as Fortescue points out in his *History of the British Army,* a lesson of history that "a powerful army is no less important for the conservation of trade than a strong navy," for the fleet, in order to discharge its task of protecting commerce, first calls for "fresh naval bases of its own to enable it to maintain effective blockades, and next for the destruction of the naval bases of the enemy so as to obviate the necessity of any blockade at all," every operation thus undertaken involving an additional military commitment.

Finally, as was pointed out in the last chapter, the Army's assistance is necessary for the wielding of the most deadly of modern weapons—the economic blockade.

The aim of this book has been to outline the story of what the Army has done in the past to assist the Navy in the maintenance of sea power; no attempt has been made to deal with future possibilities or with certain existing controversies. Air action, and the interdependence of air and sea communications, have not been dealt with, although the great effect of the third Service upon the future of Imperial defence is fully realized. The realization, in fact, brings with it certain misgivings to the soldier, for air routes, as they develop, will have to be provided with air bases, and air bases, like sea bases, require land protection, so that the Army may become involved in further defensive commitments, at the

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expense of the already attenuated expeditionary force. This, however, lies in the future; at present, and for many years to come, the great bulk of the empire's trade will continue to be seaborne, and the main problem of Imperial defence will still remain, as in the past, the problem of the maintenance of sea power. All three Services must co-operate wholeheartedly and unselfishly towards this end; there is ample room for co-operation, but there is none for competition. The greatest share of responsibility lies on the Admiralty, as it is still "upon the Navy, under the good Providence of God, that the safety, honour, and welfare of this realm do chiefly depend," but the Army and the Air Force must also help, for "you cannot expect the Navy to play international football without a goalkeeper."

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